

# POLITICAL PROBLEMS

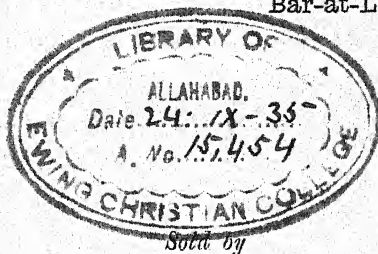
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## HUNTER COMMITTEE DISCLOSURES

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## FOREWORD.

In reproducing in book form the articles, all but one of which appeared in the *Leader* of Allahabad, the writer has been encouraged by the reception accorded to his previous work, "The Political Situation," which was favourably reviewed by the press in England and in India and commanded a ready sale. It dealt especially with the disturbances in the Punjab and the imposition there of martial law, but in the present volume the end kept in view has been to present to the public the various political problems which are exercising the minds of the people and of the Government at the present moment. There has been unfortunately a conflict of opinion on some important matters, due partly to misunderstanding and partly to the fact that usually a one-sided view has been taken to suit the preconceived ideas of the classes that were appealed to. In every progressive country the existence of a diversity of interests is inevitable, and it is especially so in India which is ruled by a foreign nation. It has been the fashion to believe that the interests of the rulers and the ruled can never be reconciled, than which there can be no greater blunder. India is about to enter a new phase of existence, when for the first time in its history the people will be allowed a voice in the administration of its affairs. There is happily no disagreement as to the goal it is one day destined to reach, which it can



only do if during the intervening period, the Government and the English nation on the one hand and the people of India on the other hand are willing to discard all misunderstandings and sink all differences and to co-operate heartily for the promotion of the moral and material welfare of the country.

DEHRA DUN  
*March 1920.*

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ALFRED NUNDY.

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# POLITICAL PROBLEMS.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE AWAKENING OF INDIA.

Lord Curzon in moving in the House of Lords the appointment of the Joint Committee on Indian Reforms stated that 'India is spinning very fast'. The least observant amongst us cannot help noticing the process. The fact of a national upheaval which no power can restrain receives general assent, and it is transforming India beyond the power of recognition. What was said about it yesterday lacks in accuracy to-day. Expression is given one day to aims and aspirations, which are startling enough, but they are decried a few days later for their falling short of the ideal that has been set up. Demands are made under this new impulse which by the time an effort is made to meet them are considered to be out of date. There can be no question the European war has had a wonderfully stimulating effect. Self-preservation has always been reckoned the first law of nature, but the recent war has emphasized the fact that self-preservation is dependent on self-determination. The spirit of liberty is abroad, and India could not help being affected by it. It is eager to enlarge its outlook and to burst the chains which fetter its movement. The conviction that the time has arrived for it to emerge from a state of tutelage is so strong that in some quarters there is to be found a peculiar indifference as to the methods by which this is to

be achieved so long as the desired end is attained. What the future has in store for us he would be a bold man who can hazard a prediction in the face of the hostile forces that are at work, the one impelling a forward advance at a headlong pace, the other putting on a curb which would impede all progress, even at the risk of a catastrophe. This is indeed a critical period in the history of India, and the rocks that are ahead can only be avoided by an accurate knowledge of the scope of the new spirit of nationality, which has given birth to a political consciousness demanding the removal of certain disabilities, the liberalising of existing institutions and the appropriation of a large share of appointments in the public services. Never was the call for the exercise of mutual toleration so imperative as it is at present, as also for the display of a large-hearted sympathy on the part of our rulers, in whose hands the destinies of the people have for the time being been placed. That there has not been a superfluity of this sentiment on their part in the past has been admitted by the authors of the Reforms Report when they said : 'We imply no criticism upon the Government of the time when we say that in the light of subsequent events we are constrained to wonder whether a bolder policy from the outset of the war and a franker inviting of India's co-operation in all forms of war effort might not have done much to steady men's minds.'

It will serve no good purpose to go over ground that has already been traversed. In the Reforms Report we have a compendium of the political history of India and of the causes and the circumstances which have contributed towards an awakening of the people to seek for higher ideals and to be eager to undertake responsibilities

which forced the necessity for a new handling of the situation thus created. We must concede that a task so immense and complex was accomplished by the Secretary of State and the Viceroy with boldness and a sympathy for the people of India, without which it was impossible to formulate the measures which aimed at a gradual transfer of responsibility for the government of the country from the Civil Service to the people. It was an honest attempt to redeem the promise made by his Majesty's Government on the 20th August 1917 to initiate a new policy which, if carried out, both in the letter and the spirit, should secure the redemption of India. Whether the proposed measures are 'disappointing' and 'unacceptable' as maintained by some critics or they are 'dangerous' and 'revolutionary' as insisted upon by others we need not pause to enquire, for what we are concerned with is the consideration of the question whether the situation now is the same as it was some fifteen months ago, when the Reforms Report saw the light of day. Is it not that in the process of 'spinning fast' the situation has so changed that it has to be looked at from another angle of vision? The effect this should have on the measures that have been designed to usher in the new order of things is a matter quite apart, but it can hardly be seriously contested that the India of to-day is not the India for whose benefit certain reforms in the government of the country were proposed. In the ideals that are now expressed there is as striking a change as there is in the views and in the policy of the Indian bureaucracy. Communities which were inert and silent then are now asserting their claims with no uncertain voice. We see before us a phenomenon which is certainly curious in the somewhat sudden coalition in the assertion



of the political rights of the various communities which make up the Indian population, and which had hitherto believed they had no interests in common. Home rule, provincial autonomy, and fiscal autonomy, which once bore a flexible interpretation, have now acquired a definite meaning and are points on which the political controversy of the future is likely to be centred. Both the advanced party in India and the official reactionaries are furbishing their arms, and unless wiser counsels prevail the prospect before us is not very reassuring.

To deal first with the reactionaries, it is a matter of regret that the Viceroy will have to be placed in the forefront. The Reforms Report is signed by Lord Chelmsford who, since the 22nd April, 1918, the date borne by this document, has so largely modified his views as to transform the identity of the scheme for which jointly with the Secretary of State he had made himself responsible. It is not only in respect to the position and the privileges assigned to the members of the Civil Service that there has been a reversal of the policy which had been formulated in all seriousness and solemnity, but taking it generally the memorandum submitted by the Government of India, dated the 5th March, 1919, puts forward certain proposals the effect of which will be to take away even the semblance of responsibility with which the representatives of the people were to be invested when the new order of things was to be put in operation. The Minister is divested of all power and of taking the initiative in measures calculated to benefit the people. He is reduced to the position of an agent of the Governor, and in matters of taxation the provincial councils have nothing to differentiate them from advisory bodies. As an annexure



to the Reforms Report is to be found a despatch from the Government of India to the Secretary of State in which the signatories desire to record the fact that the Report on constitutional reforms 'was framed after prolonged discussion with us', and they go on to add that 'we wish to convey our cordial support to the general policy which it embodies.' The complete somersault now taken by the executive members of the Council of the Government of India, with the exception of Sir Sankaran Nair, is significant of the sign of the times when hostile forces are at work pulling in opposite directions. From the reference made in the Report to the heads of Provincial Governments, who it is alleged were fully and freely consulted, the inference was natural that these exalted officials were in close agreement with the views that find expression in this document, but the proposals now adumbrated by them not only show a great variance from the original scheme but undermine the very foundation on which it is based by repudiating the principle of diarchy by which certain departments were to be transferred to the Minister to be administered by him according to the will of the representatives of the people. As a matter of fact their scheme is so reactionary that we would not be far wrong in crediting them with presenting a rehash of the Morley-Minto reforms, with certain ingredients thrown in to which the name of responsible government is euphemistically given.

The Indian Civil Service which was credited with the desire to welcome the new policy with a good grace and with the determination to carry it out loyally has, as a matter of fact, been so alarmed at the proposed curtailment of their power and privileges that Associations which had become moribund have been resuscitated for

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resisting the attack they consider is being wantonly made on their very existence. Some are even prepared to sever their connection with a service in which they will no longer be masters directing the policy in which the administration of the country is to be carried on, but would be reduced to instruments for translating into action the will of those whom they had hitherto looked upon with a certain amount of contempt. The non-official Europeans have had their lofty indifference rudely shaken and are strenuously urging that the time has not arrived for the grant of responsible government to India and that barring a microscopic minority the bulk of the people have neither made a demand for self-government nor are they capable of undertaking this task. Any departure that is made should, they say, be evolutionary and not revolutionary, and they would prefer the grant of representative government to be postponed to the Greek Calends. All the same they would bow to the inevitable and in the new councils they desire to be largely represented, as on the strength of the doctrine of heredity they consider they are the most competent persons to foster and advance the cause of popular assemblies. The domiciled Anglo-Indians are in a dilemma. As a body they are scattered, disunited, uneducated, bursting with pride in an inverse proportion to the amount of foreign blood in their veins and repudiating any interest in the land of their birth. Their inclinations would lead them to fraternise with the English population, which however receives their advances with coldness and indifference. Some few amongst them possessing robust minds are beginning to realize that their moral and material welfare is closely connected with the land wherein they have to live and to

die, and that unless they bestir themselves they will lag behind while other communities will be making rapid advances in securing political power and privileges. The new awakening has not left them untouched and they have now arrived at the stage of asking for communal representation in the various councils, but it will take them some decades to realize fully the idea of citizenship and patriotism with which their personal interests are so closely associated.

The Indian Christians were disposed of in a few lines in the Reforms Report as one of the minor communities whose interests could best be served by nomination to the councils. But they have been affected by the spirit of the times and have asserted themselves to such an extent that the Franchise Committee was obliged to recommend communal representation for them, so far as the Madras Presidency is concerned. There can be no question that Indian Christians, with some rare exceptions amongst them, have kept themselves studiously aloof from political agitation, due mainly to the position of splendid isolation to which they have been reduced by the force of circumstances, some of which were beyond their control. But there is a decided change of attitude perceptible now, and the likelihood is that in future they will constitute a factor which will have to be reckoned with. They are just emerging from their chrysalis and it is too early to give a decided opinion whether they will make common cause with the non-Christians in all respects or merely join them in demanding certain rights and privileges which they think the people are entitled to, and as regards which they speak in no hesitating terms. But of all communities those grouped under the heading of depressed

classes in the Madras Presidency have exhibited a most marvellous awakening since the publication of the Reforms Report. The question has been raised there in an acute form of the classes as against the masses, of the *intelligentsia* as opposed to the illiterate outcastes, of the Brahmans as against the non-Brahmans, of the rural population as against the urban. There is much reason for the belief commonly entertained that a good deal of the agitation is artificially manufactured. The real quarrel is not between the Brahman and the outcastes but between the Brahman and the non-Brahman, who is very much in caste and is most sensitive to the pollution caused by the touch of a Pariah or a Panchamma, whose interests he is now advocating. This new departure on his part is not free from the suspicion that in so doing he has his own axe to grind, just as much as the European Association in India and the Indo-British Association in England have theirs to grind in taking both the non-Brahmans and outcastes under their protection and in playing with them for what they are worth in resisting the proposals for constitutional reform. The refusal of the non-Brahmans to urge their cause before the Franchise Committee was a tactical blunder on their part, though it by no means follows that if they had acted otherwise the decision arrived at by the Committee would have been different to what it is, in that their claim to communal representation has been disallowed. The masses in other parts of India who have been described by the opponents of reform as 'voiceless' and 'inarticulate' are furnishing a practical refutation of the assertion that only a microscopic minority of the Indian population takes an interest in political questions. The agitation in connection with the Rowlatt

Act, accompanied as it was by mass meetings, has brought into relief some very significant facts. The definition given in the Reforms Report of the 'politically-minded classes' will have to be considerably modified and enlarged. The limitations that have been put to the combination of the people in a common cause by reason of diversity of race, of caste, of religion and of education do not seem to hold good now. And whatever truth there may have been in the past in the theory that the masses looked upon the rulers as their protectors and the interpreters of their wants, there is a decided tendency noticeable in these days on their part to transfer the desire for protection and guidance to the educated classes, who are being looked upon as their natural leaders and whose behests they are willing to carry out. The authors of the Reforms Report, desired to make the franchise as popular and as broad as possible, but are silent as regards its extension to women, as there was no general demand for it. But Lord Southborough, during his peregrinations through the country, found in certain parts of India claims being put forward on behalf of the softer sex which could not be ignored. With advocates like Mrs. Besant, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Mrs. Tata and Miss Tata an adventitious importance is being given to the question ; nevertheless it is significant that the circle of those affected or supposed to be affected by the new awakening is being gradually enlarged and may be taken to include the Indian princes, some of whom have made pronouncements that are very significant.

While the ranks of those who have been described as 'politically-minded' are receiving fresh accessions, there has been a split amongst the leaders of the national movement

and their immediate following, which has culminated in the formation of two distinct parties—the moderates and the extremists. With the advent of democratic institutions this was perhaps inevitable, following the analogy of western nations. We need not pause here to discuss the question whether the interests of India will be furthered or prejudiced thereby, but the fact cannot be ignored that, as time goes by, the advanced party is formulating fresh demands and enlarging the scope of its immediate ideals. The moderates have accepted the Reforms Scheme as a substantial instalment of responsible government, though they urge the necessity for certain modifications and improvements. The extremists were at first for rejecting it altogether but after some temporising they passed a resolution at the Special Congress held at Bombay stigmatizing it as disappointing and unsatisfactory and demanded full responsible government in the whole of India within a period not exceeding fifteen years and in the provinces in a period not exceeding six years. In the National Congress held a few months later the time limit of six years was dropped and a demand was made for the immediate grant of provincial autonomy. In both these assemblies the moderates were conspicuous by their absence but gave expression to their views in a Conference held at Bombay, thus putting a seal on the disruption that had taken place. But the experience of the extremists as a happy family was short-lived, for within a few months three Home Rule parties came into existence and thus it happens to advocate a common cause there were half a dozen deputations sent to England, seemingly to impress the people there with the effect of the new feeling of nationality as evidenced by



the existence of divergent parties, each with its own axe to grind. Efforts were made for a united stand on the common question of constitutional reform, but they failed because preference was given either to matters of subsidiary importance or to giving utterance to extreme views. The bureaucracy have no doubt given legitimate grounds for the shafts of Indian politicians to be levelled against them, but it shows how rapidly India is spinning along when a suggestion is seriously made for their total extinction. The problems awaiting solution are many and varied, but in these days, when political divergence is so pronounced, no critic can expect to find his views receiving general acceptance. It is to be hoped that credit will be given to the writer for making an honest attempt to take a dispassionate and unprejudiced view of the situation in this and in subsequent articles.

Since the above lines were written, the Reform Bill has been successfully steered through both Houses of Parliament, much to the credit of Mr. Montague and Lord Sinha, to whom we owe a deep debt of gratitude. But it is to be regretted that the two parties in India have not been able to patch up their differences, so that the one is holding a Congress in Amritsar and the other a Conference in Calcutta. This frittering of forces cannot but be detrimental to the interests of the country.

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## CHAPTER II.

### INDIA'S AWAKENING AN INCENTIVE TO LOYALTY.

The previous article may fairly be credited with having established the fact that there is an awakening in India which has more or less affected all classes and communities. It is not a sudden and unlooked for outburst, but is the result of a process of gradual evolution. Its advent was inevitable as the natural result of British rule, with its adjuncts of peace, security of life and property, education of a high standard and a familiarity with European civilization and culture. The responsibility for this awakening, therefore, rests to a large extent on the English nation which had it within its power so to govern India as would strangle any desire for or any effort towards securing political emancipation. For, in the various stages of British rule, there have been individuals who advanced the theory, to quote the words of Lord Ellenborough, one of its exponents, that 'we had won the empire of India by the sword, and we must preserve it by the same means—and the continuance of British rule in India depended upon the exclusion of the natives from military and political power in the country.' The commercial instinct has ever been strongly pronounced with the English people. They came to India influenced by no philanthropic motives, but to exploit the country for what it was worth. With this in view the permanence of their rule was looked upon at first as the primary consideration and anything calculated to impair it was seriously deprecated. But be it said to the

credit of the English nation that it soon came to recognize the paramount moral obligations placed on it to govern India in the interests of the people. Thus was laid the foundation of a train of causes which have operated insensibly but surely and have brought about the fruition of that political phenomenon which Lord Macaulay foreshadowed in the following terms :—‘It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown that system ; that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government, that having become instructed in European knowledge they may in some future age demand European institutions.’

This demand is now being urged firmly and insistently. It has received a favourable response in some quarters, while in others it has been stigmatised as an indication of diminishing loyalty and as the first step taken by the educated classes towards subverting British rule in India. This, it is alleged, is the real aim of political agitation, as is evidenced by its occasional development into open rebellion. The seriousness of such a charge has not prevented its being advanced by a good many Anglo-Indians, official and non-official, by their agents in the press, by some retired bureaucrats and by a stray English journal or periodical, misled by garbled accounts of the newly aroused political consciousness of India or acting under the inspiration of British capitalists who apprehend that India reformed would cease to be the dumping ground for their manufactures. English statesmen and English people generally discountenance this charge of growing disloyalty and on the whole have sympathized with an awakened India desirous of securing liberal

institutions wherein they can take a part in the administration of the affairs of the country.

In the Reforms Report we find it stated that 'it is due to the traditions of the Civil Service, dating from days when it had no vocal criticism to meet, which impose silence on the individual officer while the order of things that he represents is attacked and calumniated'. This is true so far that English officials do not appear on public platforms to discuss political questions or to reply to attacks that are very often levelled against them, and may be sometimes very unfairly and unjustly. But nevertheless they carry on a political propaganda as steadily and as relentlessly as do their *bete noir*, the educated classes of India. This is done through the Anglo-Indian journals which usually reflect the views of those who mainly support them and often privately contribute to their columns. Those who pay the piper can call for the tune and thus it is that hymns are religiously chanted in praise of the bureaucracy whereas to decry the educated classes as political agitators is looked upon as a pastime not only legitimate but creditable. That some Indian journals indulge in these same pleasantries at the expense of Government and its agents furnishes no excuse whatever to the English publicist who, with his superior education and culture and a more correct conception of what is right and proper, is expected to set a higher standard of journalistic duty. The general attitude of the Civil Service towards the awakening of India finds a fair exponent in Sir Verney Lovett who was their spokesman before the Reforms Committee. In reply to Mr. Montagu as to the fact of a considerable development in the interest taken in politics by the masses, all he could say was that 'the

chief sign of such a development was increased hostility to Government'. And a similar sentiment, but in an exaggerated form, finds expression in a recent issue of the *Englishman*, which writes: 'If the Indian press accurately reflected Indian opinion, then one would have to say that at the present moment the whole of India was so bitterly hostile to British rule that the country was on the verge of revolt.' The non-official Europeans if not affected by the official views would perhaps not be hostile to the political advancement of India, though through their accredited agent in England they have given expression to the opinion that the people are not yet ripe for representative government; and Sir Henry Stephen, the second in command of the Indo-British Association, went a step further and delivered himself of the dictum that self-government in India is not conceivable now and would not be conceivable within any time we can contemplate, and he therefore disapproved of the principle of the Announcement of August 1917, utterly ignoring the fact that the India of to-day is not the India he was familiar with twelve or fifteen years ago.

Of much greater consequence are the views of English publicists, who do lead public opinion in England. The *Spectator* repudiates the assertion that the Government pledged itself by any announcement to carry out any plan of democratic reform, and in no measured terms condemns the scheme for which it holds Mr. Montagu responsible. Mr. E. Barnes Mitford, writing in the *Fortnightly Review*, concedes the fact that 'there has been no awakening like unto the present,' but by a curious process of reasoning arrives at the conclusion that the politically-minded people are resolved to subvert British rule in India and that the

Home Rule movement assiduously preaches the doctrine that there can be no salvation for India till it has rid itself of the tyrannical alien rule. The trump card in the hands of these critics is the idea which they exploit for what it is worth, that old feuds and differences in India have not disappeared and the influence of caste is as strong as ever. This they say stands in the way of a growth of nationality, in curious contradiction to the views of Sir James Meston, who represented the Government of India, and stated that 'the spirit of nationalism is a very real influence in the life of India of to-day...which inevitably leads to a very rapid development of political consciousness'. But the underlying reason of the hostility to Indian reforms is the apprehension that it may be utilized by disaffected persons, in which category all those engaged in political agitation are placed, to subvert British rule. For having the temerity to give expression to this view the Indo-British Association drew upon itself a severe castigation from the Secretary of State for India, while Mr. Bennett, who having a personal knowledge of Indian affairs can speak with authority, followed it up by stigmatizing a pamphlet distributed to the members of Parliament by this Association as a 'caricature of recent events and movements in India. It puts everything out of perspective and everything out of proportion and presents India to the English public merely as a hotbed of sedition.' But is it so?

Here is a charge to be met, the seriousness of which cannot be minimised. It is repudiated with as much warmth as is displayed by those who bring it. On the one hand, a lack of sincerity and the indulgence of prejudice are attributed even to those who, influenced by

honest convictions, are apprehensive of a growing tendency towards disaffection ; on the other hand, the protestations of loyalty on the part of men who are interested in public affairs from patriotic motives, are received with a smile of incredulity. If there was a closer association between men holding divergent\* views many misunderstandings would be avoided and there would be a greater disposition for the exercise of that charity which thinketh no evil of others. It is significant that no imputations are made against the people at large. These are officially described as being peaceful and contented and devoted to the rulers who are looked upon by them as their benefactors and the interpreters of their wants. It is the educated classes who are reproached with being needlessly restive and discontented, and such of them as take a part in political agitation are accused of carrying on a disloyal propaganda. Now if the political agitator must needs become disloyal and if the inevitable result of education is to produce political agitators, the logical conclusion is that education being responsible for the trouble and turmoil we see around us, should either be discontinued or restricted ; but no one dare assert this for fear of doubts being entertained about his sanity. It was about a century ago the battle over education in India was fought and the question being considered in all its aspects, it was decided to give the people the benefits arising from it, with a full knowledge of the consequences that would arise therefrom. They have arisen and it is too late to retrace the step that was once deliberately taken. And it is gratifying to find the Secretary of State and the Viceroy recording their opinion that 'there can be no question of going back or withholding the education in which we ourselves believe.'



The awakening of India from being the effect will now become a potent factor in the progress of education, and the circle of those who are politically-minded will in a corresponding measure be necessarily enlarged.

The fallacy seems to lie in the proposition which finds favour with some persons that education and political agitation must in the long run lead to disaffection and rebellion. As a matter of fact it is education and the incentive it affords to partake in political agitation, which restrain the tendency and the temptation to indulge in disaffection. It would be futile to deny that for a variety of reasons a considerable amount of discontent pervades through all classes and communities in India. It is discontent which produces disaffection, leading on sometimes to sedition and disloyalty, unless there is some influence which can exercise a counteracting effect. The ignorant man smarting under the irritation of causes which have given rise to discontent and having no outlet for the expression of his feelings translates these into action by indulging in outrages and in open defiance of the laws which regulate and keep together society. He knows of no other method whereby he can relieve his overcharged feelings or obtain redress for the wrongs to which he is subjected by what he believes is the wanton tyranny of the rulers. What is the Bolshevism of to-day but the revolt of the ignorant and half-educated masses against the authority by which they had been subjected to gross indignities and oppression? Are not the ranks of the anarchists recruited mostly from a class of men destitute of education as they are of the material things of the world? Has not the populace been responsible for revolutions which have upset powerful monarchies, and caused



the streets to flow with blood? The principles and actions of an educated man are entirely different. He may be discontented, but he has a safety-valve in political agitation, which he believes if well-directed will generally achieve the end he has in view. His superior intelligence and his experience warn him of the fatal consequences of interfering with the settled order of things; for a well-disciplined mind realises that revolutionary crimes, anarchical outrages, apart from inflicting a serious injury on society, do not as a rule secure political salvation. The remedy they provide is often far worse than the disease. With an educated man discontent develops into disaffection only when he has failed to obtain redress by a resort to legitimate means afforded by an agitation in public meetings and in the press. But there is a great gap between discontent and disaffection, and as great a gap between the latter and disloyalty, the necessary consequence of which is the subversion of the existing rule. The educated classes of India repudiate the charge of being disaffected, for they do not accept the judicial definition of disaffection, namely, 'the absence of affection.' They admit they are not overflowing with affection for the bureaucracy, but for that reason to charge them with disaffection towards the Government that rules over them is an absolute departure from the truth. Mr. Madhava Rao in his evidence before the Joint Committee of Reforms stated the time has arrived for the English Civil Service to be dispensed with, which certainly does not indicate any great affection on his part for its members. He merely made a statement of fact from a utilitarian point of view and there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of his statement that he was thoroughly loyal to English

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rule in India. On the other hand there are many who controvert his statement that the Civil Service can be dispensed with at present, from which it would be equally incorrect to draw the inference that they have any great affection for the bureaucracy. Then again disaffection and disloyalty are by no means convertible terms. The one is more in the nature of a sentiment, the other is sentiment translated into action. The one is a passive state of mind and no overt act need be committed to give evidence of it, the other implies that acts have been committed in breach of the allegiance due to constituted authority. But the transition from disaffection to disloyalty may not be a long or a difficult process unless prevented by a timely remedy. An English political writer says : 'Representative institutions, petitions, public meetings, a free press are various means through which the people can assert itself. When refused these means and when yet sufficiently vigorous to use them, it will assert itself by armed rebellion or, if that is not possible, by secret conspiracies and assassinations.... A wise statesman will make revolution impossible by making it unnecessary, or certain of failure, because not supported by the General Will.'

Those who bring the charge against the educated classes of being disaffected or disloyal ignore the fact that the reasonableness of the demands made by them is practically admitted. It is not a question of principle that is now at issue ; it is more in the matter of details that a controversy is maintained. The removal of racial and other disabilities, the grant of liberal institutions, the larger employment of Indians in the public services, the industrial development of the country—these have all been promised and in due course it is to be hoped

effect will be given to the proposed reforms. Why then should any class of persons be disaffected or disloyal? If the answer be that in asking for self-government the idea underlying it is that at some future period it will lead to the assertion of independence, all that can be said is that some people allow their suspicions and their apprehensions to get the better of their judgment. They fail to realize the necessity of British rule in India. It is not a trifle that can be dispensed with at pleasure or with safety. It protects the country from foreign aggression and from internal dissensions. If England goes, some other foreign power must take its place and Englishmen do themselves little credit if they imagine any other nation is likely to be preferred, and they ignore the fact that the educated classes have everything to lose and nothing to gain by the overthrow of the present Government. But it will be said that suggestions are being made as to the immediate elimination of the English element in the administration of Indian affairs. The idea is so preposterous that none but extreme faddists, of which happily there are not many, will be found to entertain it. Even when self-government is attained, it is to be hoped in the interests of the country the best men will be engaged in the various services without any racial question being brought in, while at present to a certain extent the English element is indispensable. But the Civil Service as a ruling caste, as it is in these days, is an object of special antipathy and is bound to go when the new order of things comes into operation. This was made quite plain by Mr. Montagu when he said: 'The Announcement of the 20th August 1917 promised the transfer of responsibility. From whom to whom? To the people of India

from the Civil Service of India. If we say to the Civil Service to-day that their political position will be the same in the future as it has been in the past, the announcement of his Majesty's Government becomes meaningless.'

There is another aspect of the question which is entitled to consideration. That England was in great straits when the European war was in progress there can be no question, and that was an ideal opportunity for the disaffected to create trouble. But we find that from the King-Emperor downwards there has been a full and unqualified recognition of the loyalty of all classes and communities in India. Are we to understand that utterance was being given to sentiments that were not sincere? The loyalty of the people is as genuine as is the acknowledgment it has received at the hands of the English nation. Even the Government of India in its Moral and Material Report for 1917-18 have put on record the fact that 'as to the general solidarity and determination of educated India to support Government at this juncture, there can be no possibility of doubt.' And one other matter in this connection need only be referred to. If we look back to the political history of India during the last three decades in which the activities of the educated classes have been most pronounced it will be found that beyond the use on occasions of violent language whether on the platform or in the press in their quest for reforms there has been no concerted action on their part betraying a hostile attitude towards Government, such as may be expected from persons that were disaffected. Neither the revolutionary party in Bengal nor the promoters of the Ghadar movement in the Punjab had their sympathy or support. The non-official members of the Legislative

Council helped the Government to pass the Defence of India Act as they had done previously when the necessity arose for legislation in connection with the press. And as to the so-called 'open rebellion' in the Punjab, the less said about it here the better, for it is one of the points the Disorder's Inquiry Committee has to decide. The recent occurrences there were rightly characterised by Government as local disturbances when a reference was made to them by the Amir of Kabul's agents, a clear indication that this unfortunate episode is now being looked at in its proper perspective and proportion.

Since the above appeared in the Leader, the Inquiry Committee has recorded the statements of a number of official witnesses, with the result that disclosures have been made of certain acts done by the civil and military authorities, characterised with such cruelty and inhumanity that they have aroused universal horror and indignation, just as much in England as in India. It is on occasions like these that the loyalty of a people is put to the test. This stands firm, mainly due to the belief that they will receive full justice at the hands of the English nation, which is most sensitive as to its reputation for justice and humanity.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE CAUSE OF INDIAN DISCONTENT.

In the previous article ample material is to be found to convince even a hostile critic of the educated classes that the charge of being disaffected which is brought against them rests on a very slender basis. It would be futile to ignore the fact that some of them on occasions have been intemperate in their speeches and in their writings or may be in their conduct, but the number of these is a negligible quantity. Then, again, if we look at the reasons by which they were actuated and the objects and ends they had in view it will be found that they were voicing the general discontent that prevails in the land and were desirous of having certain grievances removed which were producing needless irritation. There was nothing inconsistent in this with a whole-hearted loyalty to constituted authority. The achievements of British rule in India in promoting the well-being of the people have been shortly referred to in the previous articles and need not be recounted here, for they receive full recognition without any reserve whatever. But a curious problem is presented to us for solution in that notwithstanding all the English nation has done to benefit India the people are discontented and very much so, in spite of what hangers on at the gates of officials or some title-holders *in esse* or *in posse* may have to say to the contrary. The agents of the British rule in India solve the problem in the drastic method usually adopted by them in dealing with unpleasant truths.



The existence of any actual discontent is denied by some or by others is put down to the mischievous activities of professional agitators. Their own responsibility in this matter is entirely ignored.

Education and contact with European civilization and culture which have given birth to the political consciousness of India may be credited to a certain extent with the present unrest, for longings and aspirations have been aroused which not being satisfied have produced irritation and consequent discontent. This has been aggravated by the discouraging and halting attitude of the rulers. Their professions have been profuse, their promises legion in number. The desire to deal fairly and justly with India has been strong, but it has been subject to certain well-defined limitations. In some instances it would seem no effect was intended to be given to the promises that were made ; in others those who were charged with giving effect to them refused to do so, and sometimes a policy of self-interest was pursued at the instance of England's capitalists, which has prejudiced the industrial welfare of the people of India. But the lofty aloofness and reserve that has been adopted is perhaps responsible more than anything else for the estrangement of the educated classes.

'The Government of India is too wooden, too iron, too anti-diluvian to be of any use for the modern purposes we have in view. I do not believe anybody could ever support the Government of India from the point of view of modern requirements.' This was said on the floor of the House of Commons and is of course open to the charge of irresponsibility attaching to an opinion expressed by a private member. But Mr. Montagu has the courage of his convictions, and as Secretary of State he, with the added



sanction of the Viceroy, repeated this in the Reforms Report in the following terms. 'It is evident that the present machinery of Government no longer meets the needs of the times ; it works slowly and it produces irritation ; there is a widespread demand on the part of educated Indian opinion for its alteration ; and the need for advance is recognized by official opinion also.' Yes, educated India more than three decades ago began to make this demand at the meetings of the National Congress by pointing out in what respects the administration was defective and could be improved upon. Thus it was that the political agitator emerged into existence. He was harassed and vilified and placed under a ban. In fact, the Hindu community as a whole was discredited, while the Mahomedans who stood aloof were patted on the back and were the recipients of official favours. The Government from being autocratic had assumed the character of a benevolent despotism, professedly working in the interests of the people. To mollify the resentment of educated India promises were made and efforts were put forward to mitigate the rigour of this despotism by deferring to their views when its own interests were not likely to be prejudiced. But with the best of intentions no appreciable good was achieved. The foundation of local self-government was laid by Lord Ripon in 1881 and municipalities and district boards were brought into existence, but in 1918 we have Lord Chelmsford admitting that the hopes entertained of these bodies have not been fulfilled, 'as the presence of an official element on the boards has been prolonged up to a point at which it has impeded the growth of initiative and responsibility.'

But it is in the higher domain of politics that the failure has been most pronounced. Since 1885 the cry of the National Congress has been that the people should be allowed some voice in the administration of the affairs of the country. The response made was so inadequate and the consequent resentment so great that in 1907 the Morley-Minto scheme was introduced which gave promise to usher in a new millennium wherein the lion and the lamb were to amicably discuss their common affairs, but the Secretary of State made it clearly understood that from this amicable confabulation no inference was to be drawn that it was in any sense a step towards parliamentary government. We are still under the regime of the hybrid institution that was brought into existence and which is neither fish nor fowl nor good red herring. Speeches, sometimes by the yard, are made by the non-official members and are either treated with lofty indifference or are responded to with frowns of displeasure. The lion is unable to divest himself of the advantages he has been favoured with by nature and circumstances. The utmost condescension and consideration he can shew is to dictate a speech for his jackals who ostensibly represent a community, but whom no community with any self-respect would select as their spokesmen, considering they lack the disinterestedness and the talent which are usually requisite for this position. The mutual accommodation of the lion and the jackal is a prominent feature of the public life in India of to-day. If men like Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Mazharul Haque decline to be identified with such an assembly and have severed their connection from it, the country is so much the poorer thereby, for though we may have no sympathy with some

of their views, they are living examples of the self-respect and self-esteem which, even the opponents of constitutional reform admit, is the result of the awakening of India to political consciousness. They may be wrong-headed, but they will never betray the interests of their country to bask in the sunshine of official smiles. Disappointment and resentment at the failure to secure some response to their demands, the legitimacy of which is now officially admitted, is undoubtedly responsible to a great extent for the discontent of the educated classes and for their estrangement from the rulers of the land.

So far back as 1833, when the East India Company's Charter was renewed by 34 William IV., c. 85, the Court of Directors thus unfolded their views in respect to this enactment:—'The Court conceive this section to mean that there shall be no governing caste in British India; that whatever other tests of qualification may be adopted, distinctions of race or religion shall not be of the number; that no subject of the King, whether of Indian, British or mixed descent, shall be excluded from the posts usually conferred on uncovenanted servants in India or from the covenanted service itself provided he be otherwise eligible.' But a caste was created, proud, exclusive and so jealous of its rights that John Bright stated in the House of Commons that:—'The statute of 1833 made the natives of India eligible to all offices under the Company. But during the twenty years that have since elapsed not one of the natives has been appointed to any office except such as they were eligible to before the statute.' And then followed the Queen's proclamation which is recognized by Indians as their great Charter of Liberty. And off and on other promises and assurances have been given, but with

what result? By instituting a competitive examination in England the Indians were practically excluded from the higher appointments and in 1860 a committee, composed of the members of the Secretary of State's Council, recognized this and advised the holding of a simultaneous examination in India so as to refute the charge of 'making promises to the ear and breaking it to the hope'. Was this done? Then came the lowering of the age of the candidates, the real object of which was to keep out Indian competitors. As a sop the Statutory Civil Service was sanctioned, to be recruited in India on a smaller scale of pay, but even to this a half-hearted effect was given, and in a few years it came to a premature and inglorious end. In 1878 a proposal was seriously made by the Government of India to close the Covenanted Civil Service to Indians, but Lord Cranbrook, then Secretary of State for India, declined to entertain it, stating that no scheme would have a chance of being sanctioned by Parliament which included a repeal of the clause in the Act of 1833 investing Indians with certain rights of employment. This drew from Lord Lytton the famous minute which speaks for itself:—'We all know that these claims and expectations never can or will be fulfilled. We have had to choose between prohibiting them and cheating them and we have chosen the least straightforward course. The application to natives of the competitive examination system as conducted in England and the recent reduction in the age at which candidates can compete are all so many deliberate and transparent subterfuges for stultifying the Act and reducing it to a dead letter. Since I am writing confidentially I do not hesitate to say that both the Governments of England and of India appear to me, up to the present

moment, unable to answer satisfactorily the charge of having taken every means in their power of breaking to the heart the words of promise they had uttered to the ear.'

India is a poor country. Whether it is poorer now than it was when it came under British rule is a controversial point and need not be discussed here. At one time it was self-contained and provided the necessities of an immense population and even its luxuries. 'From the times of the Romans to our own times', writes Sir Alfred Lyall, 'Indian trade has drained the gold and silver of Europe.' What has become of this trade? Silk and cotton fabrics were the chief articles of export, but England excluded these not merely by fiscal duties but by actual prohibition without which, says Mill in his History of India, 'the mills of Manchester and Paisley would have stopped at the outset, and could scarcely have been set in motion by steam...British goods were forced on India without paying any duty and the foreign manufacturer employed the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he could not have contended on equal terms.' And further to stimulate these manufactures an excise duty was imposed on locally manufactured goods in spite of the remonstrances of the Government of India. The vast supply of stores needed for the administration of the country was indented for from England, though many of the articles could have been locally obtained. The Industrial Commission appointed by Government was constrained to remark that though India is a country rich in raw materials and in industrial possibilities, 'the manufacturing capacity of the country has been far from being sufficiently utilized by Government departments in the



past.' The result has been that the industrial population has been thrown back on agriculture for a living, and India has to supply raw material to other countries for whose manufactures it has become the dumping ground. Industrial reform has been an important plank in the political agitation of the past, but it has been a cry in the wilderness. The Swadeshi movement was the positive and boycott the negative form in which expression was given to the discontent that was aroused and we have the Secretary of State and the Viceroy admitting that the economic factor has entered largely in the political situation in India and that it is partly responsible for the existing unrest. The European war further emphasized the military importance of industrial development. Hence the conclusion has been arrived at that 'both on economic and military grounds Imperial interests also demand that the natural resources of India should henceforth be better utilized.'

This will relieve the economic situation to some extent, but no appreciable benefit will be obtained till some measures are devised to stem the enormous drain in the shape of Home charges, which the Duke of Argyle, once Secretary of State for India, characterised as 'the unjust and illegal tribute to England.' So far back as 1790 Lord Cornwallis wrote in a despatch 'that the heavy drain of wealth by the Company, with the addition of remittances of private fortunes, was severely felt in the languor thrown upon the cultivation and the commerce of the country'; and there has been since then a continuous rise in this drain. That some of it, and may be most of it, is unavoidable in the case of a country subject to foreign rule may be true enough, but certain charges



imposed on the Government of India are unjust and with reference to these Lord Cross, another Secretary of State for India, stated that 'I am certain that in the course of a few years the Indian people will force us to do justice.' Apart from the nature of these charges it is an indisputable fact that they are partly responsible for the heavy taxation which presses mostly on the masses who in the Moral and Material Report of India, which has just been issued by Government, are described as 'engrossed in agriculture winning a bare subsistence from the soil.' Their wants are few, but if even these are not satisfied discontent is aroused and the fact that they are 'slow to complain and prefer to suffer rather than to have the trouble of resisting' would explain this ordinary quiescence, which sometimes finds relief in a sudden outburst, much to the consternation of the officials, who put in motion all the resources of civilization to suppress what is modestly termed an 'open rebellion.'

A reform in the administration of criminal justice is another matter which for years past the National Congress has pressed upon the Government. The separation of judicial and executive functions has been advocated by a good many fair-minded English judges and administrators, for the position is certainly anomalous that the same man should try a case who has previously hunted the criminal as head of the police, has ordered his prosecution as head of the executive, is actively discharging in court the functions of a prosecuting counsel, and is then called upon to pronounce an unbiassed judgment on the guilt of the accused. It cannot for a moment be supposed that the executive are indifferent to the the pure administration of justice, and if to that be added the fact that the

existing system is productive of a vast amount of discontent, the wonder is that the much desired reform is not gradually introduced. Cognate with this question is that of the police. It is a historical fact that when there was no police there was less crime, but now the variety in the grades of policemen is equalled by the extent and variety of crime, whether actual or occasionally manufactured by those whose living depends on it. If, as in olden times, the king were to try to ingratiate his subjects by promising to grant any boon asked by them, they would with a united voice cry out 'abolish the police.' The masses if they were not 'inarticulate' would stigmatise the assertion that the country is governed by Englishmen as pure fiction, for they believe it is ruled by the police with whom they come into contact and whose activities they have reason to recollect, whereas the rulers they have hardly ever seen, much less given any ground for them to pose as their protectors. If the existence of the C. I. D. is indispensable it affords a significant commentary on British rule in India, in that it has so demoralized the people that their every day movements need to be watched. The alleged corruption of the subordinate police has no doubt attained an unenviable notoriety, but it would seem that the subordinates in all departments have reduced to a fine art the extracting of illegal gratifications. A possible remedy is the formation of a public opinion that will resist these exactions, which are certainly productive of much discontent, but it would be unfair to place the burden of this on the English officials.

Perhaps the most potent cause of discontent, which at the same time is the most irritating and humiliating, is racial

distinction. It affects a large number of persons, for its influence is felt in every sphere of life, it has made impossible any social relations between Europeans and Indians and hampers the display of mutual good feeling. To it may be attributed the inequality of treatment in matters affecting the ordinary rights of citizens. The restriction against Indians entering some of the services in the higher grade or being enrolled as volunteers or holding a commission in the army or possessing arms without a license is galling in the extreme and produces much bitterness of feeling. Wherever an Indian goes the spectre of racial distinction shadows him. In public and private places, in travelling by railways or in steam boats and even in courts of justice, where special rights are reserved for the accused who are British born subjects, a differential treatment is accorded to Europeans and Anglo-Indians. A man's colour or his coat is taken as a criterion of respectability rather than his position or character. The authors of the Reforms Report only partially realized the extent of the evil when they wrote :— ' If there are Indians who really desire to see India leave the Empire, to get rid of English officers and English commerce, we believe that among their springs of action will be found the bitterness of feeling that has been nurtured out of some manifestation that the Englishman does not think the Indian an equal.' In seeking for a remedy, they admit the difficulties of the problem, which no state help can solve, and with the best of intentions they can only suggest an improvement in the social relations of the two classes. The absence of these relations is not the cause of the estrangement, but is in itself the effect of certain well-defined feelings, the existence of which is

much to be deplored. It is too large a subject to be dealt with here, and may be reserved for separate consideration.

Since the above lines were written the Government of India Reforms Bill having passed both Houses of Parliament has received the King's assent. On the 23rd December, 1919, was issued a royal proclamation profoundly sympathetic to the people of India and calculated to mitigate the various causes of discontent. It has no doubt created a good impression, which would have been deeper and more wide-spread, but for the lamentable disclosures made as to the excesses committed by the authorities, civil and military, in connection with the Punjab disorders. These have had a most irritating effect and it will be some time before this irritation may be expected to subside.

## CHAPTER IV.

### RESPONSE TO INDIA'S AWAKENING.

A passing allusion has been made to the fact that to start with British rule in India was autocratic, savouring of the nature of a military despotism. The primary consideration then was the preservation of this rule, the character of which later on was somewhat modified to assume the form of what was called a benevolent despotism, wherein another consideration was allowed to creep in, and that was a regard for the welfare of the people. As to the methods by which this was to be achieved, the rulers reserved to themselves the right to be the sole judges, to the entire exclusion of the views of those immediately concerned. For it is one of the peculiarities of autocracy, under whatever name it sails, that the autocrat not only considers himself infallible, but takes any disagreement with his views as a personal affront. Up to a certain point this led to no serious inconvenience. But in course of time by a process of gradual evolution a certain class of persons came into existence who have been termed politically-minded and who consider they are entitled to form and to formulate an opinion as to what is conducive to their interests and to that of the people at large. During the last thirty years a prominent feature of British rule in India has been, on the one hand, the demand on the part of such persons of certain privileges and of a reform in the administration of the country, and, on the



other hand, a denial on the part of Government of the right of those who were reckoned to be upstarts to interpret the views of others beyond their circumscribed group, as also of the necessity for and the reasonableness of the demands made by them. Any disagreement with the official view was at once stigmatized as hostility towards the rulers, to suppress which the strong arm of the legislature was utilized to pass repressive measures. When Sir Verney Lovett told the Joint Committee on Indian Reforms that the only sign that the masses in India were taking an interest in political matters was an increased hostility to Government, there spoke the autocrat, and when Mr. Montagu retorted that he had a similar experience in his own constituency there spoke the democrat. India is at present at the parting of the ways, dominated by two contradictory influences ; autocracy fighting tooth and nail for its life, backed up by traditions of a century and a half, and democracy slowly and steadily advancing, swayed by a wave of nationalism which is pervading the whole world.

It is more than probable that before long the citadel of autocracy will have to surrender. It received its first shock in 1885, when a small body of men, 72 in number, at the first meeting of the National Congress in Bombay, made a few modest suggestions pointing out the defects of the administration very much in the attitude of suppliants. Since then a series of onslaughts have been levelled against it, characterized by the growing intensity of the force with which it was assailed. Each year added to the boldness of the resolutions, to the spirit with which they were discussed and to the scope of the matters that were criticized. There was a decided change in the



attitude of the educated classes and the language used by them. From opinions and suggestions they proceeded to express 'a firm conviction' and to make 'emphatic protests', to 'urge' the expediency of certain acts and to condemn others as 'retrograde, arbitrary and mischievous.' Autocracy was disconcerted and embarrassed at the growing dissatisfaction and discontent and tried to propitiate its assailants by concessions which by the time they were put into operation were considered by the recipients to be out of date. In the meantime the political education of the *intelligentia* was slowly and steadily advancing and in 1906 the flag of Swaraj was unfurled by Lord Salisbury's 'black man', Dadabhai Naoroji, who at his advanced age came to preside over the National Congress meeting at Calcutta. That Swaraj is now designated self-government or Home Rule, and the position taken up at present is that of claiming certain privileges and reforms as a matter of right and making demands the extent and scope of which exceed by far those advanced even a decade ago. They are to be found crystallized in the Congress-League Scheme which embodies the views of all communities and all parties. It received the formal sanction of the Congress and Muslim League of 1916 and recited that 'the time has come when his Majesty the King-Emperor should be pleased to issue a proclamation announcing that it is the aim and intention of British policy to confer self-government on India at an early date, and that India shall be lifted from the position of a dependency to that of an equal partner in the Empire with the self-governing dominions.' How this was to be carried into effect is given in a plan which is somewhat elaborate in its details.

Considering only a few years before India had received the benefits, somewhat dubious though they were, of the Morley-Minto reforms, the adequacy of which Lord Morley tersely summed up by the remark that he could not give us the moon, it was hardly to be expected that any heed would be paid to the demands of men whom Government persisted in stigmatising as professional agitators, utterly destitute of any sense of responsibility. The European war engrossed the attention of the Governments both in England and in India and the discussion of controversial matters was earnestly deprecated. But events were moving fast. India came out with such a voluntary and unexpected demonstration of loyalty that it extorted from the *Times* the remark that 'on our part when we have settled accounts with the enemy, India must be allowed a more ample place in the councils of the Empire.' Mr. C. H. Roberts, then under-secretary for India, characterised this loyalty as a 'reasoned sentiment based upon considerations of enlightened self-interest,' and asked the British public to alter the angle of vision in their perspective of the Indian problem. The English Cabinet was most sympathetic to the aspirations of educated India, though Mr. Bonar Law expressed the view that nothing practical could be done 'while the metal was still glowing red-hot from the furnace of the war.' But even he had to succumb to the march of events. England was fighting, with the hearty co-operation of India, for the rights of the smaller nations in Europe, so as to preserve their entity. The gospel of democracy, equality, self-determination and freedom was a favourite theme all over the world and English statesmen were foremost amongst the preachers. Gigantic

operations were in progress to give by force of arms this gospel a practical effect. Though the problem of Ireland was bristling with controversy, yet an attempt was being made to solve it. The war had given India a new sense of self-esteem and self-respect and a growing consciousness of nationality had brought together the Hindus and Mahomedans to take concerted action. A natural impatience was evinced at the delay on the part of Government to make a full and frank declaration of its policy towards India. The necessity for this had become all the more urgent as there were clear indications of a desire on the part of the Government in India to put down the Home Rule propaganda by means of repressive measures such as the internments of Mrs. Besant and Messrs Arundale and Wadia, which aroused universal indignation. As a counter-blast the idea of practising passive resistance was seriously entertained. It would be as incorrect to say that educated India had any desire to embarrass England or to take advantage of its serious and urgent preoccupations as it would be far from the truth to assert that British statesmen were influenced by motives and considerations other than a realization of the fact that India had attained its manhood during the war and could be released from tutelage and the genuine belief that the conferring on it a boon to which it had shown itself entitled would cement the bonds of union between a dominant country and one which was heretofore looked upon as a dependency.

It was under these conflicting circumstances, for they were exhilarating from one point of view and depressing from another point of view, that the announcement of the 20th August, 1917, was made by Mr. Montagu in the House of Commons on behalf of the English Government.

It no doubt eased the situation in India, where it was looked upon by the people as a Charter of Liberty which put a seal on their sense of nationality. Later on doubts were sometimes expressed mainly by interested parties as to how far individual members of the Cabinet stood committed to the policy underlying this announcement and the extent to which Parliament would be prepared to recognize its validity. Up till recently Lord Curzon was considered a dark horse, and his attitude towards the Montagu-Chelmsford Report afforded matter for considerable speculation, but in moving in the House of Lords the reference of the Government of India Reforms Bill to a Joint Committee he removed all doubts by pleading earnestly for the sanctity of the declaration, on the full significance of which he placed no limitations whatever. In spite of some discordant notes, the sense of the House was decidedly in harmony with this view. Equally gratifying was the debate in the House of Commons on a similar motion made by Mr. Montagu, for it evinced a complete unanimity as to the necessity and urgency of redeeming in full the promise made, presumably after due deliberation, on the part of Government, by the Secretary of State for India. The discomfiture of Lord Sydenham and other reactionaries, the number of whom happily is not large, was complete. Now this Announcement contains certain salient features which deserve a somewhat detailed analysis. (a) Both the Government in England and India are committed to a particular policy, (b) that policy is defined as the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions, (c) the end kept in view is the realization

of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire, (d) the progress in this policy is to be by successive stages, (e) the Government reserves to itself the right to be judges of the time and measure of each advance.

This is England's response to India's awakening and to the various demands that are being made on its behalf, and we have to consider whether this is an adequate response. In the ordinary affairs of human life the decision of such a question usually rests on the person who is most interested, and he is undoubtedly the individual who formulates the demand. For if he is not satisfied the result is discontent on his part and a persistence in urging his demand. And more so would this principle apply to a country, which is in subjection to a nation more powerful than itself. Past experience has shown that the action of those who devise remedies by which they are not personally affected and which are super-imposed for the benefit of others is more or less perfunctory in its nature and in the long run the relief afforded is next to useless. Such indeed was the value of the Morley-Minto reforms, though they for the first time provided for an Indian taking part in the administration of the country, but so far as the representatives of the people were concerned they were left as before in the position of irresponsible critics. Leaving aside details, a person taking a calm and dispassionate view will find that the vital principle underlying the Announcement of the 20th August, 1917, and the Congress-League Scheme is common to both. The home-rulers asked that some step towards self-government be taken, and that is precisely what the declaration proposes to do. The desire



is expressed that India should be lifted from the position of a dependency—well, that will be the practical result when full effect is given to the terms of the Announcement. That more than a fair start has been made in this direction by the admission of India to the Imperial War Conference and the Imperial Cabinet and by its representatives being allowed to sit on equal terms with those of the self-governing Dominions at the Peace Conference, none but the most prejudiced will deny. Nor can we ignore or minimise the significance of the removal of certain racial disabilities and of some standing grievances, or of the proposals for a larger employment of Indians in the public services and for the industrial development of the country or of the acceptance by the representatives of the Dominions of the principle of reciprocity of treatment. It will therefore have to be admitted that the response given by the Announcement of the Secretary of State to India's newly awakened sense of nationality and to the demands that are the consequence thereof is adequate and satisfactory on the whole, but of course how far the Bill now before Parliament gives effect to it is another matter and is outside the scope of this article.

Objection has been taken in some quarters to the last two clauses of the Announcement reciting that the progress of the policy outlined therein is to be by successive stages and that the Government reserves to itself the right to be the judges of the time and measure of this advance. A time limit is sought to be imposed within which self-government to the fullest extent is to become an accomplished fact. The first point to be considered is why Government has placed certain restrictions on the boon that it was granting. The reasons given are that



on the rulers rests the welfare and advancement of the various sections of the Indian population and that the changes that are to be introduced are in the nature of an experiment and time alone can prove whether it proves a success, which will greatly depend on the manner in which the people have been found to discharge the responsibilities conferred on them. It can not be said that this is under the circumstances in which we stand at present an unreasonable position to take up, though it would be idle to disguise the fact that there is a certain amount of risk that is being run in dependance being placed on some unknown authority to concede what in the future we might in the light of proved experience be justly entitled to. Then again as regards the demand made in this connection there is an absence of unanimity. It is only one section of the politically-minded people who have given their adhesion to it, and the Congress at which this claim was advanced was rendered conspicuous by the absence of what is known as the moderate party in India. The Congress-League Scheme, which was subscribed to by the parties, does not support this view, for in the presidential address delivered at the Congress where it was formally adopted, I find the Honourable Mr. Ambica Charan Mozumdar stating, 'We do not fix a time limit, for the duration of the war is uncertain and there must be a transitory period through which the process must pass.' And the Hon'ble Mr. Jinnah, as the president of the All-India Muslim League, emphasized the fact 'that it should be made clear by the Government in an authoritative manner that self-government is not a mere distant goal that may be attained at some future indefinite time, but that self-government for India is the

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definite aim and object of the Government to be given to the people within a reasonable time.' Now, what is a reasonable time? The answer is obvious—when during the period of transition the people have given satisfactory evidence of their fitness to take over fully the task of self-government. Indeed, this may happen to be sooner or it may be later than any period we may now arbitrarily fix. And as to Government reserving the right to be judges of the time and measure of each advance, this may technically place our future progress in the hands of others than ourselves, but as a matter of fact our progress will depend entirely on ourselves by giving evidence of our fitness for fresh responsibilities being entrusted to us. The people that have been able to insist on the principle of self-government being conceded to them need not fear that any obstacles placed in the way of the full enjoyment of the privilege will be so great that they cannot be surmounted.

Distrust begets distrust. It is hardly wise on our part to start the new life we are about to enter, as participants in the administration of the country, by being suspicious of the good-will or the good faith of the English nation. It would be most ungenerous on our part to ignore the cordial expressions of the sympathy of English statesmen towards the newly awakened spirit of nationality in India and of their resolve to see justice done to it. As to the English people there is reliable evidence that they are disposed, as a result of the educative process brought about by recent events, to take a new interest in the affairs of this far off country, which to the bulk of them is an unknown land. Thanks to the unwearied exertions of the deputations that went from India to give evidence

## POLITICAL PROBLEMS.

before the Reforms Committee, and primarily to that of Mrs. Besant, the Labour party in England have not only been interested in the aims and aspirations of educated India, but have promised their cordial help in securing their practical realization. Even the self-governing dominions have come to look to India from another angle of vision and to entertain for it a new born respect. In a recent speech General Smuts as Premier of the South African Dominions stated in reply to an address presented by the Indians of Durban :—‘ Owing to her magnificent effort India has won for herself a place among the nations of the world.....There was a great feeling in England in favour of India’s aspirations.....We are members of one family and belong to the same Empire.’ And have we not had practical evidence of the good will of English statesmen in that they have formulated a scheme to start us on the road to self-government, wherein is to be found an element of responsibility as contrasted with the Congress League Scheme which was entirely destitute of it ?

On the other hand, the position taken up by the *Times* and by those who entertain similar opinions is neither intelligible nor logical. They are willing to support the principle of dualism in the Provincial Governments but not as regards the Central Government. Apart from the merits of dualism there is an important matter in issue, and that is whether the terms of the Announcement have been fully carried out when the Government of India is not only kept free from popular control, but the Bill now before Parliament is characterised by the absence of any indication as to when and how this is likely to be achieved. It is admitted that the pledge of the 20th August, 1917, should be fulfilled and that without delay, but its

wording had given grounds for the belief that some kind of popular control would be allowed in the Government of India, perhaps under conditions that would be more strenuous as regards 'successive stages' and 'progressive responsibility' than those imposed in respect of provincial Governments. The withholding of a privilege as regards the grant of which there is a complete unanimity of opinion is undoubtedly causing considerable disappointment and dissatisfaction. It will leave the sore open and lead to continued agitation, which it was hoped would now cease so that the energies of the Government and of the people could be concentrated in the carrying out of constructive work of reform.

The Indian National Congress at its session in Amritsar has given an adverse verdict in respect to the proposed reforms, stigmatizing them as "inadequate," "unsatisfactory" and "disappointing." On the other hand the Conference of the Moderates "welcomes the Government of India Act of 1919 as a definite and substantial step towards the progressive realisation of responsible government." We shall see further on which of these views represents the considered opinion of the Indian *intelligentsia* and of the masses. It is sufficient to note here that even Mrs. Besant, who at first was for the rejection of the Reforms Scheme is of opinion that "autocracy has been crippled in the Central Government."

## CHAPTER V.

### INDIA'S CAPACITY FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT.

The evidence now being recorded by the Parliamentary Committee on Indian reforms has brought out in strong relief certain views that are diametrically opposed to each other, the one insisting that India is prepared to undertake the entire task of self-government, the other entertaining grave doubts that it will ever be fit for this purpose, or at all events, not in the near future. It is obvious we are here dealing with extremists on either side, against whose honesty no reproaches need be levelled, but who have allowed prejudice to obscure their judgment. When Mr. Patel stigmatizes the Montague-Chelmsford report as 'that little thing' or Mr. Madhava Rao is desirous to dispense at once with the whole body of English members of the civil service or the Muslim League and Congress deputations plead for full provincial autonomy—they have allowed their resentment against the bureaucracy to obsess their minds to such an extent that their primary consideration is some how to be rid of the offensive agents of British rule in India. Lord Sydenham, Sir Henry Stephen, Sir Verney Lovett and others of that clan are so steeped in autocracy that they cannot brook the idea of people who have been bred in dependence being even partially freed from control and permitted to poach in their cherished preserves; and they, therefore, allow themselves to be swayed by considerations which would hardly appeal to those free from bias. It is, therefore, pertinent



to enter into a somewhat minute examination of the true condition of India to take up the burden of self-government.

There are certain matters in respect to which, happily, there is a consensus of opinion, for even the bureaucracy are compelled to accord their assent thereto. In a previous article a reference has been made to Sir James Meston's views as regards the newly awakened spirit of nationality in India. Sir Thomas Holderness supported this when he emphasized 'the increase of political activity among the educated people in India. The population of India was awakening to a sense of national consciousness and was no longer content to render passive and unquestioning obedience to the rulers.' In the Report of the Moral and Material Progress of India, which has just been officially issued, it is stated that 'the time has gone by when the topic of constitutional reform in India could be summarily dismissed with the remark that those who demand it form but a fraction of the population.' But, of course, from this no inference can necessarily be drawn that the people are fit for constitutional government, for an advance in political consciousness does not necessarily imply a growth in administrative ability, nor is education any guarantee for it. And this is the line that is readily adopted by the opponents of reform. These may be classed as negative objections, but there are certain positive reasons advanced to show the unfitness of Indians for self-government.

It is stated that any devolution of power on the part of the Government would mean its passing into the hands of an oligarchy, either on the basis of religion or of education. The Brahman question has suddenly come to the front and has loomed very largely before the Joint Committee. It is a large question and merits special treatment. But a



reference to one or two points in connection with it will be enough to establish the artificial nature of the agitation in respect to it. It is only in the Madras presidency that a controversy has been started by and on behalf of non-Brahmans, and no other part of India is interested in it. The fact that it dates only since the publication of the Reforms Report indicates that it is the failure to secure communal representation that is the real grievance and not any recent aggressive conduct on the part of the Brahmans. But the bogey of a priestly oligarchy is knocked on the head by a somewhat significant incident to which Mr. Montagu drew the attention of Sir Alexander Cardew, who seemed somewhat hot on the subject, that the non-Brahmans had, in the last council election in Madras, secured a larger number of seats than the Brahmans. These, in South India, no doubt, occupy a dominant position, partly by reason of their priestly functions, but mainly because they hold the monopoly of education. Their influence is a good deal exaggerated, as for instance, when Sir Henry Stephen stated that a judgment pronounced by a Brahman judge carried greater weight. The litigant is more interested in the result of a case than in the personality of the judge. The contemptuous treatment accorded to the Pandahs in some of India's shrines is evidence that the Brahman power is on the wane. This is typical of what is going on around us. Education is exercising a levelling influence and whatever else happens there need be no apprehension that in these matter-of-fact days there is any prospect of India being dominated by a priestly oligarchy.

But we are on firmer ground when we come to the educated classes. Strenuous objections have been raised

to the transfer to them of any power by the Government on the ground that it will be monopolized by a comparatively small section of the Indian population, who come under the category of being politically-minded. Assuming the correctness of this proposition the first point to be considered is whether the rest of the population object to their kith and kin, who happen to be educated, to have entrusted to them certain legislative and administrative functions or do they prefer the autocratic rule of a foreign nation? The Reforms Report gives, as the main reason for withholding popular control in the Central Government, the uncertainty whether educated India is in sympathy with and capable of fairly representing those who do not come within this category. It is a well known fact that if, in a middle class family in India, there are a dozen individuals who can be reckoned amongst the *intelligentia* there are just as many who are outside this group, for through indifference or poverty or some other untoward circumstances, they evince no interest in politics or cherish any great desire for a vote. Their more favoured brethren do not discard them for this reason. Or, if a poor man is a keen politician it is far from correct to presume that he will do anything to the detriment of his richer relatives. And if we go further down to the masses, the apprehensions expressed on their behalf are equally groundless. Recent events should surely knock out of the head any idea that the bureaucracy are more in touch with the masses who look to them to be the interpreters of their wants in preference to the educated classes. In fact some of the reactionary witnesses before the Joint Committee have expressed their misgivings about the result of the *intelligentia* being entrusted with responsible government inasmuch as

these would, by reason of their close association with the masses, promote ill-will amongst them towards the Government. A glance at the resolutions passed at the Congress meetings will afford convincing evidence that the welfare of the masses has not been overlooked. Some of the demands made were for the benefit of all communities while those which were calculated to promote the interests of the masses were larger in number than such as would solely benefit the classes. If any further proof were wanted of the good will of the educated Indian towards the masses it is to be found in the Reforms Report where its authors credit him with having 'by speeches and in the press done much to spread the idea of a united and self-respecting India among thousands who had no such conception in their minds. Helped by the inability of other classes in India to play a prominent part he has assumed the place of leader.' And when we find Indian witnesses advocating the extension of the franchise, while one or more have pleaded for universal suffrage, the contention that there is an absence of sympathy with the masses rests on a very slender basis.

But, it is argued, the number of the *intelligentia*, who have raised an outcry for political rights, is so small, about 5 per cent. of the population, while the rest of the people are 'voiceless' or 'inarticulate,' that the time has not arrived for saddling India with constitutional government. Recent events have given somewhat painful evidence of the fact that the masses, though not strictly entitled to be called political-minded, are yet, under the guidance and direction of the educated classes, exhibiting a keen interest in public affairs and especially in matters involving their personal welfare. And the probability is

that as time goes on there will be an appreciable growth in the number of the people who are so disposed. But even if it is true that there will be a transfer of power to the hands of an educated oligarchy, is there anything so extraordinary or objectionable in it as to arouse the protests that have been raised? Without entering into the merits of the question whether the Southborough Committee might not, with safety, have extended the franchise, there is no reason for India to be reproached for its incapacity to raise an electorate that is even 10 per cent. of the population. By comparing this with some foreign countries we find that three years after the Reform Act of 1832 the electorate of England was 4.6 per cent., of Ireland 1.2 per cent., of Scotland 3.2 per cent., and so late as, 1888 for the whole of the United Kingdom it had risen to only 8.9 per cent. Sweden started with an electorate of 1 per cent., and Italy with  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. And the United States of America, the most democratic of countries, had so late as 1888 an electorate of only 17.5 per cent. of the total population.

There is another objection raised by Anglo-Indian officials, and especially by those who have retired, which has also obtained recognition in the Reforms Report. It states that 'there runs through Indian society a series of cleavages—of religion, race and caste—which constantly threaten its solidarity and of which any wise political scheme must take serious heed.' That the people are split up into numerous divisions it would be idle to deny, but is it really a fact that their political interests are as irreconcilable as they are stated to be? And is the government entirely free from the charge of having, in one notable instance at least, encouraged these differences or at

all events made capital out of them ? The Mahomedans kept aloof from political agitation when the Hindus first embarked on it. They were commended and patted, and favours were showered on them. The head of a local Government unblushingly compared the position of Mahomedans to that of a favourite wife. Well, the Mahomedans, in course of time, have developed a most uncompromising hostility to the manner in which the administration of India is being carried on, and foremost in the ranks of home-rulers are stalwarts like Jinnah, Mazarul Haq and Hassan Imam. And any unprejudiced person can see for himself that in the political movements of to-day Mahomedans are just as forward as the Hindus. The Congress-League Scheme was the joint product of both the communities. The occurrences at Arrah and Katarpur were due to the religious bigotry of the ignorant masses or the narrow-mindedness of some better informed persons, and have been equally denounced by both communities. That a real change has taken place in their feelings is evident from the fact that Hindus and Mahomedans are now welcomed in each other's places of worship and are being encouraged to deliver political harangues from their pulpits and platforms. As to the fraternization which a few days ago characterized the celebration of the Moharrum and the Dussehra and the Khilafat Day, it has simply staggered people of the old school and is an object lesson to the Government, which it would be an act of supreme wisdom on its part to take to heart. In Canada and South Africa, where social animosities were most pronounced, the grant of full responsible government has been justified by the result, but for India, only partial responsibility is being demanded and a hundred and one



objections have been raised. At the same time, we would do well not to exaggerate the significance of the indications around us of a newly-formed amity and unity. The very fact that communal representation is being demanded by various communities is enough, in itself, to raise doubts as to the extent and reality of these sentiments, which may be disturbed by a trifling difference on some religious or social matter. But in their attitude towards political questions there is evident a genuine disposition to be guided by the principle laid down by Dadabhai Naoroji—'Whether I am a Hindu, a Mahomedan, a Parsi, a Christian, or of any other creed, I am above all an Indian. Our country is India, our nationality is Indian.'

From the foregoing remarks an inference will perhaps be drawn that it is intended to establish the fact that we are now fully prepared to undertake the task of self-government. It will be a great day for India when this could be truthfully said about it, but it is doubtful if, so far, we have arrived at that stage. We have yet to prove that we are equal to bear the responsibilities that will be placed on us. But this we can only do if the opportunity is afforded to us and not if it is withheld, as it is being done in the case of the Central Government. While we are entitled to enter a protest against this overstrained caution on the part of Government, we are by no means so sure of our position when we proceed to claim provincial autonomy without going through the stages that have been imposed on us. The desire to dispense with these stages does credit to our patriotism; and that we have a sufficiently large number of men of education and ability to undertake any task, however difficult, will not be denied; but what we lack is administrative



experience and very often a due sense of responsibility in the discharge of a duty. Though British rule has been autocratic the idea that India may some day be fit for self-government has not been absent in the minds of some of its rulers, possessed of sympathy and good will towards the people of this country. One of these was Lord Ripon, who looked to local self-government to pave the way for self-government. With this in view municipalities and local boards were started by him. That they have not been an unqualified success it would be idle to deny, and in the Reforms Report it is frankly admitted that this is due, to some extent, to the action of Government officials who have kept these institutions under their leading strings and have thus prevented their natural development. Within the few months that Government interference and control have been relaxed, a most desirable change is to be noticed, and it may confidently be stated that the people will justify the responsibility that has been placed on them. But can it be said that in the past we have acquitted ourselves so as to be able to repudiate the charge of incapacity? Go where we will, the same sad story is presented to us of members who have subordinated the public good to selfish ends and have abused the position they had acquired, of others who have allowed sectarian feelings to influence their conduct or have wasted valuable time in wrangling over petty matters or by indulging in long-winded speeches or allowed themselves to become the tools for registering the mandates of officials. Is it any exaggeration to say that self-respecting people keep away from these institutions, so as to avoid coming into contact with objectionable officials and still more objectionable non-officials? So far then as administrative

experience is concerned it cannot be said that India is any the richer by what has been acquired during the several decades that municipalities and district boards have been in existence.

When we survey the higher domain of the legislative councils the same disappointment stares us in the face at the amount of experience that has been acquired or the work that has been achieved. It is true there was not much to be done there except to act the part of a critic, but even this, besides its being a thankless task, was barren of any good results for the reason given in the Reforms Report that 'the presence of the official *bloc* may, to some extent, give an air of unreality to criticism in the council hall'. There are several types of members to be found in the councils. There are those devoid of brains and of self-respect, who are there as creatures of the Government, but be it said in their favour that they are more or less harmless ; for no one takes them seriously and any material benefit they derive from the part they are expected to play is counter-balanced by the loss they sustain in falling in the estimation of their own countrymen. It is doubtful who is more to be commiserated—such men or the Government, which utilizes such men. Anyhow their days are numbered, for in the new order of things they will not be tolerated in any public assembly. We next come to another type of men, proud, over-sensitive and with lofty ideals before them, who again, to quote the words of the Reforms Report 'belittle the utility of the councils, if not denounce them as a cynical and calculated sham'. With the courage of their convictions they shake the dust of the councils off their feet. But the country has need of such men, and we will see them

before long fighting in a more dignified council the cause they have so much at heart. Yet another type which is represented by men who are veterans in the field or are giving the best days of their youth and who are described as possessing "a sense of responsibility in dealing with Government legislation—and a skilful and, on the whole, a moderate use of the opportunities we have given them in the legislative councils of influencing Government and affecting the course of public business." This is a generous tribute, but it will hardly be endorsed by the bureaucracy in India, considering the hostile attitude they usually adopt towards non-official members, and are ready not only to browbeat them, but to treat them with a discourtesy of which some fine samples have been given at the recent meeting of the Imperial Legislative Council. There is yet another type which is described in the Report as thinking 'more of display'. That those who come under this category do not fully realize the responsibility of their position is due to the sense of unreality which characterizes the proceedings of the councils. Giving such men every credit for their good intentions, they sometimes discredit the cause they are fighting for. Conscious of the fact that what is said by them is treated with indifference by the Government, and will, in no way, affect the issue of the matter under discussion, they indulge in prolixity in debate and an oratorical display with the main idea of appealing to the gallery. They loom large in the eyes of the public, by whom they are looked upon as heroes. It cannot be said they have added to their own legislative or administrative experience or of that of the country, which unfortunately, has a weakness for heroes. On the one hand we are pleading for self-

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government, on the other hand we allow ourselves to be dominated by heroes,—than whom it would be impossible to find a set of men more unpractical. They may be conscientious, they may be spiritually-minded, but as leaders in the path of self-government, they are most dangerous, and may lead us into pitfalls which more practical men would have the foresight to avoid. If India wishes to convince the world that it is qualified for self-government, it must eliminate hero-worship and be guided by men whose conduct is characterized by sobriety and moderation and practical common sense.

Self-government is a high ideal, but it is not difficult of attainment if only we will take to heart the words of that great man, A. O. Hume, to whom India is under eternal obligation and who exhorted us : 'Never grow faint or weary in the up-hill fight ; stick to constitutional methods ; be united ; brother-soldiers in one holy army, put far off from you alike all selfish aims, all personal differences ; be vigilant, wise and temperate alike in worth and in desert ; be sure that a power greater than all, King's or Viceroy's or Parliament's, will lead you in the fulness of time, to all that you can rightly and wisely desire and to all that you have tutored yourselves to merit. Let all strive unselfishly to pave the way for India's enfranchisement, and the happiness and growth, physical, mental and moral of her teeming millions.'

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE BUREAUCRACY.

In the Announcement of August 20, 1917, His Majesty's Government proposed conferring self-governing institutions on India *as an integral part of the British Government*. In the memorandum submitted in 1916 by nineteen elected members of the Imperial Legislative Council the demand made was for self-government *under the aegis of the British Crown*. In the Congress-League Scheme, wherein is formulated in full the demand of educated India, we find self-government asked for so that *India shall be lifted from the position of a dependency* to that of an equal partner in the Empire with the self-governing dominions. In the controversy which has raged over the Reforms Report and in the evidence given by the Indian witnesses before the Parliamentary Committee though self-government is the goal which is kept in view it is always subject to the understanding that India is to *remain an integral part of the British Empire*. So far then it is clear that no section of Indian politicians contemplates the severance of India from England but that this country should be placed on a level with self-governing dominions.

These, it may be taken as an admitted fact, have no desire to cut themselves away from the mother-country. 'Blood,' it is said 'is thicker than water,' and the truth of this aphorism may be fully conceded. But in this materialistic age there are other and more practical considerations



which cannot be ignored. The colonies take a pride, and very rightly, in being members of the British Empire, and in the later day developments the probability is that they will be allowed a substantial share in the direction of Imperial policy, with the result of drawing together the bonds which unite the dominions with the mother-country. But apart from this the colonies are not strong enough at present to stand on their legs and face the world with a determination to fight for their existence, unaided by the moral and material support of England. And so it will be with India. When, in the fullness of time, she has secured full responsible government she will not be in a better position, and perhaps in not so good a position, to defend herself from foreign aggression without the aid of some power with sufficient resources which can be effectively utilized for their protection. So that, if for no higher motives, selfish considerations would induce India to sacredly maintain its connection with the British Empire. Sufficient evidence has, of late, been given of her loyalty to a country of which she is at present a dependancy, but in respect to which she has the ambition to occupy a much higher and a more trusted position.

India, then, has no desire to be independent, though such of its people who may be reckoned to be politically-minded are in a ferment to bring about a change in the present relations with the nation by which they are governed at present. English statesmen have evinced a sympathetic attitude towards her longings and aspirations and are satisfied that the conferring of responsible government on its teeming millions will be conducive to their best interests and will, in no way, subvert the supremacy of the paramount power. But the governing caste in



India, for a caste it has become with time-honoured traditions to back it, seems to think otherwise. It is filled with vague apprehensions as to the future, both of India and of the British Empire. Sir Verney Lovett, as their representative, stated before the Joint Committee on the Government of India Bill with reference to the vigorous propaganda pursued by 'anti-Government extremists' that 'a strong lead was needed against this, which the British Parliament should give in order to prevent the ruin of India and of British interests'. Now, there is a confusion of ideas here which ought to be cleared up. That there are extremists in Indian politics will have to be admitted, just as there are extremists amongst the governing class in India amongst whom Sir Verney Lovett is a shining light. Sir William Meyer, on being asked whether the grant of self-government to India would lead to its insistence on separation, stated that in the present state of world politics, most Indians realized that they could not stand alone. And Lord Carmichael, who had been Governor both in Madras and in Bengal, gave as his opinion that his experience as such did not make him think that responsible government would be impossible or harmful in India. British India, as an integral part of the Empire, would, he believed, benefit by its realization. In the face of such opinions Sir Verney Lovett has well qualified himself to be called a bureaucratic extremist. But when he stigmatizes the Indian extremists as 'anti-Government' he overshoots the mark. They are not hostile to the Government, but they exhibit a decided animus against the English members of the civil service. Some there are who would like to clear out this class root and branch at a moment's notice. But Sir Verney Lovett will

say 'we are the Government, and a hostile attitude towards us is tantamount to hostility towards Government'. That the agents of British rule in India do, at present, constitute the Government is no doubt true, but it does not necessarily follow that the display of animus towards them is to be reckoned as a high crime and misdemeanour, though certain complacent judicial authorities seem to entertain this view. To be logical, Mr. Montagu ought to be arraigned as the chief offender, for he makes no secret of the fact that it is his heart's desire to cripple and disable this class by transferring the governing power from their hands to the hands of the people and his latest pronouncement is to the effect that 'it is preposterous to suggest that the appointed destiny of the country should be delayed or altered in the interests of the service'.

But the service is not disposed to take lying down what it believes is a fiat for its gradual extinction or, worse than that, their degradation from the position of masters to that of servants. The authors of the Reform Scheme have in the most fulsome terms, acknowledged the debt India owes to the members of the civil service, who are told that heretofore they shaped and helped to shape the policy on which the administration was to be run and they have a fine administrative record, but that, in future, they will have to share their responsibilities with the people whom they will have to train in years to come for relieving them entirely of their burden. An appeal was made to their loyalty and it was fondly believed that it would elicit a satisfactory response. But no sooner the Secretary of State's back was turned on India than the 'white mutiny' declared itself and repudiated the assertion that the service had been consulted in respect to the

proposed reforms or had in any form given these their approval. They protested against the diminution of the prospects of promotion, against what they considered was a degradation of their position in that, in the new order of things, they would have to carry out a policy in the framing of which they had no effective voice. They chafed under the idea that they will have to carry out the behests of a minister which they may disapprove as not consonant with the interests of good government. Sir Michael O'Dwyer has stated that members of the civil service are unwilling to serve under Indian ministers. As to training men who are to relieve them of their burdens, which is the new role allotted to them, they are curious as to the identity of those they will have to educate. Surely not the ministers who are to be practically their masters. And when the various services come to be largely recruited from amongst the Indians, they are filled with apprehension about the fate of a solitary Englishman in a mofussil station nursing his woes without another white man to console him in his misfortunes. Finally, the decision is arrived at that India is no longer a fit country to live in for an Englishman possessing any self-respect and therefore 'such of us as are not prepared to make themselves pawns in what is termed in the Report "one of the greatest political experiments ever undertaken in the world's history" should be given the option of retiring on pensions calculated with reference to their service and to their prospects'.

It would be unfair to the civil service to say that their grievances are absolutely groundless, though to what extent its members deserve to be commiserated or compensated is another matter. The 'white mutiny', be it

said, is confined to the civil service only and, it would appear, to only a certain section of it, which would be glad to anticipate the period of their retirement by a few years at the expense of the Indian tax-payer. The younger members have not had time to get affected by any sentiment and may be expected to approach the question from the practical point of view whether their interests are likely to be prejudiced, to which they have every right to take exception. Englishmen in other services and departments do not seem to be disturbed or alarmed at the constitutional changes now being forged, for they realize the fact that so long as they efficiently and conscientiously discharge their duties and are remunerated accordingly, they are fulfilling the destiny which brought them to India. It cannot be said that their sympathy towards the misfortunes of the civil service is of a very gushing nature, for they have often had to smart under the overbearing and offensive behaviour of its members. Lord Carmichael, while deploring the hostile attitude so often taken up by Indians towards the civil service, had to admit that he 'had heard as harsh criticism of the Indian civil service from Europeans belonging to other services'. And the reason is obvious. By a peculiar combination of circumstances all power is centred in the hands of the civil service. The district officer who may happen to be a junior of six or seven years standing controls all the other departments. He may within half an hour pass orders directing the superintendent of police, the civil surgeon, the forest officer or the engineer to do this, that or the other or may criticize one thing or another done by them without possessing any technical knowledge or experience which makes him competent to

do so. Naturally the service which has to produce men to perform such super-human functions suffers from a swelled head and is considered somewhat of a nuisance by other European officials, who will not be averse to being freed from a thralldom, which, at least at times, must be humiliating.

When we come to look upon the relations of the civil service to the educated classes the fat is fully in the fire. Each favours the other with unmitigated scorn and matters have come to such a pass that some change was bound to take place to prevent an explosion. Time was when those put to rule over the land were not only looked upon but were, as a matter of fact, the protectors and benefactors of the people. They lived amongst them, they moved with them, they studied their wants which they relieved to the best of their ability. England was a far off land and stray hill stations which then existed were the resort of the privileged few, for dak gharries and bullock carts were not sufficiently inviting to be utilized for a few days pleasure. Each bungalow had a walled enclosure attached to it wherein were located the dusky beauties who filled the position of wives or mistresses to men who had to lead a more or less solitary life in India. Where such fraternisation existed there was no room for racial feeling. But times have changed. Privilege leave for three months enables a visit to be paid to the home-land. A twenty-four hours run and often less is all that is necessary to transport the tired and jaded worker to the cool heights and fresh breezes of the attractive summer resorts now scattered all over India. An increase in the number of Europeans, official and non-official, has brought into existence clubs in every little station in India. Not only



are illicit connections tabooed but a curious development of morality is the ostracism of a European, whether male or female, who has formed a legitimate alliance with an Indian. All round we see influences at work to widen the breach between Englishmen and Indians.

If ever a man deserves to be commiserated it is the district officer of to-day, for he is the victim of a system of administration which evidently looks upon him as a monster, for to no human being is given the capacity, physical and mental, to cope with the multifarious duties with which he is burdened. He is supposed to have his finger in every man's pie, thus causing needless irritation without any appreciable gain to the public. He has to detect the criminal, order his prosecution and then sit in judgment on him, for a beneficent legislation has ordained it so. And when an aggressive and pertinacious limb of the law begins to quote rulings by the yard, his wits go wool-gathering and he dare not resort to the only possible relief, that of flinging the volumes that had been handed to him at the head of the officious counsel, and has to content himself by making sarcastic and semi-idiotic remarks about the judicial luminaries whose rulings have been quoted. But he consoles himself by nourishing an eternal hatred against lawyers in general, which is returned with compound interest by this class. There is, however, a greater torment he has to endure and that is his commissioner. The district officers would like to see him at the bottom of the sea, for they are worried out of their lives by reminders sent by the superintendent of this official, who usually possesses a devilish ingenuity for justifying the existence of his master, which is judged by the number of letters despatched daily, by putting the most outrageous



questions on the simplest matters and by sending directions and recording critiques the inanity of which even the commissioner would realize if there was anything more serious to occupy his mind. But a yet greater infliction is kept in reserve for him, for time-honoured traditions and the most sacred injunctions of Government enjoin on him the duty of giving interviews to the toadies and sycophants who are usually to be found standing outside his gates or to the *raises* and gentry of sorts who trade on their position and on the good nature of the official by asking for favours for themselves or for their relations up to the tenth generation. Harrassed in mind and body, if the official were to lay violent hands on some of them he would certainly be entitled to the benefit of the provisions in the Penal Code relating to justifiable homicide. Here again he has to content himself with entertaining and exhibiting the utmost contempt for his interviewers in particular, and for Indians generally, for producing such wretched specimens of humanity. So much for one of the official methods of promoting good will between the rulers and the ruled. It need hardly be said that the self-respecting Indian, by whose advice the official would really be benefited, never darkens his doors.

It is, therefore, clear that whatever might have been the merits of the district officer in the past, for it was he who built up the 'fine administrative record', he has outlived the period of usefulness that was allotted to him. He is no longer the protector and benefactor of the masses, for he has lost touch with them. They are turning now to the educated classes for help and guidance. With the *intelligentsia*, who are the direct outcome of British rule in India, and with their aims and aspirations he has no

sympathy and as such has to adopt an attitude of aloofness if not of hostility. He has lost the confidence of the people over whom he has been set to rule. With his energies frittered in a hundred and one directions he has neither the capacity nor the time to be an efficient administrator. As the representative of autocracy, which whether by choice or the exigencies of the service he has to protect at all hazards, his armoury is replete with methods which, in these progressive days, are not only repulsive but ineffective to secure the end in view. Repression, coercion, racial contempt and absolute rule may procure temporary relief but in the long run engender a resentment towards those whose instinct of self-preservation compels a resort to such measures as a forlorn hope. Bureaucracy has been weighed in the balance and is found wanting. Sir Claude Hill admitted as much when he stated in the memorandum submitted to the Joint Committee on reforms that 'it cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the bureaucracy and executive, with the best intentions, are liable to make mistakes and to misjudge the effects of measures.' The existing animus against this class is personal, to a certain extent, due to the extreme offensiveness of some of its representatives, but is, in a larger measure, directed against the system which produces such men. There is a strong feeling amongst the educated classes, and English statesmen are more or less sympathize with it, that there is no prospect of any liberal institutions being introduced in India unless the civil service is deprived of its power, prestige and privileges. And this is precisely what is aimed at by the authors of the Reform Report when they propose to take away from the service the decision of the

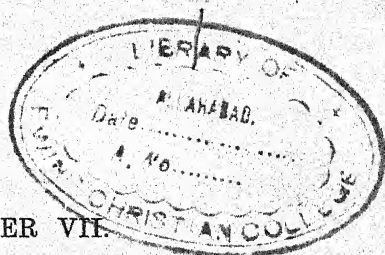
larger questions of policy and to reduce the status of its members to that of the civil servants in England. This is bound to be the logical result of the memorable Announcement of August 1917 in which important constitutional changes are outlined, and against this fiat there is no appeal, for it has been stated, "our policy is irrevocably declared and it ought to content all sober minds".

The civil service with its present traditions, is doomed. The bureaucratic oligarchy will, after a time, cease to exist, much to the relief of other Europeans, official and non-official, as also of the people who are pleading for home rule. But it by no means follow that Englishmen who have contributed so largely towards evoking the spirit of nationalism in India, are to be eliminated entirely from the department which, in the future, will carry on the administration of the country. The outcry for a larger number of appointments in the public services does not mean the entire exclusion of Europeans but is directed to the reversal of the policy by which the children of the soil are prevented from attaining to positions they are qualified to fill. India desires to emerge from a state of tutelage, but has no illusion that, as matters stand at present, it can dispense with the wisdom, the experience and the good will of those who have so far directed its destiny. The scientists, the educationalists and the experts in the various departments of learning have received, and will ever receive, a warm welcome, and why should this be not extended to those whose services are, from one point of view, more valuable and even indispensable? Whatever may happen a few decades hence, at present, in the interests of India, it is essential that there should be a strong leaven of the English element amongst those who

will be charged with the work of administration ; with this difference, that in the future the people will have a share in directing the policy that is to be pursued and that there will be a larger proportion of Indians who will give effect to this policy. The civilian of the future, in place of being the sole ruler, will have the responsibility shared by others and will be released from the odium, which is now borne by him entirely, for acts that are unpopular. That the members of the civil service, come out to India actuated by purely benevolent motives is a fiction which will, before long, be replaced by the fact that, like other Englishmen in the various departments, they seek out a career in this country as it offers an opening for their talents which cannot be utilized in their own home, as it is overstocked by those possessing equal or superior talents. The struggle for existence is a powerful motive which will impel English youths to visit the shores of India, provided the doing so is sufficiently remunerative, in spite of the fact that the opportunity for indulging in autocratic rule will be taken away. In a democratic country like England the tendency is not in this direction ; it is a luxury which is acquired after a certain term of residence in India and is repugnant to most well regulated minds. The civil service, in its own interest, should then cheerfully accept the new order of things, wherein a great sphere of usefulness is still open to it. On the other hand, some of our rising politicians would do well to moderate their antipathy, towards a class which, all things considered has done a good deal for India and may yet do a good deal to further its material and moral welfare. The future relations between England and India are by no means so disconcerting as some pessimists would have us believe.

Since the above lines were written the Reforms Bill has found a place among the statutes of the realm. A discussion of its merits is out of place here, but there is one outstanding fact which is very relevant. From all sides the advice has been tendered to us, with the best of motives, that if we wish to utilise to the full the new privileges that have been conferred on us we must work in co-operation with the civil service. Lord Selborne, who was President of the Joint Committee, has given expression to views characterized by the highest statesmanship and sympathy towards India. He advised the people to be moderate in their criticism of things and persons unless they wished to alienate the good will of their fellow subjects, and to the civil service he advanced an appeal which is very significant:—"Your work will be different, your position will be different, but so far as this humble admirer of your great work can judge it is not going to be in the future a bit less interesting. It is going to be of a different kind, but I am quite certain that the service you can render to India and the Empire is going to be greater in the future than it has been in the past."





## CHAPTER VII.

### THE NEW CULT OF AUTOCRACY.

All round we find a high tribute being paid to India's growing sense of nationality. It is further conceded that self-government, which is its logical sequence, cannot now in some form or other be withheld from us. In a previous article a sufficiently strong case has been made out as to India's capacity to undertake this task. This is a valuable asset and on it we are going to stake the future welfare of 315 millions of human beings. Take away this asset and we forthwith become bankrupt and do not deserve that any heed should be paid to our professions and protestations. We will soon be put on our trial; how are we going to acquit ourselves? Are we going to make ourselves the laughing stock of the world? Do we wish to be the instruments of bringing further disasters on our country? It looks very much as if something of the kind will happen unless we are careful about our future movements. We know with what jealous and envious eyes these are being watched. A false step now taken will discredit us, and very rightly, in the eyes of the English public which is ready to confer on us an inestimable boon. It, therefore, behoves us to seriously consider the present situation and act with the utmost circumspection. For we shall soon be called upon to undertake a responsible duty which is not being forced on us, but which we are eager to assume. But a week ago I laboured hard to establish the fact that we are competent to discharge this



duty. It is not pleasant for a writer to have to retract what he has written, but it is better that than to live in a fool's paradise to be ignominiously turned out of it.

The goal we are aiming at is creditable enough, for it is the gradual attainment of self-government as an integral part of the British Empire. This is to supersede the present absolute rule of an alien nation. It embodies a revolution, though not accompanied by the clash of arms and streets overflowing with blood. It is a peaceful revolution, the seal to which will be put on the floor of the British Parliament. For a nation to have exercised despotic sway over a country for a century and a half and to quietly surrender its rights predicates not merely a nobility of mind, but the sagacity of being able to perceive that in the progress of events a change had become desirable both in the interests of the dominant power and of the people whom for so long it had held in subjection. England is a democratic country, and despotism in any form is repugnant to its instincts. But a resort to it in India was inevitable by reason of the influences that were at work. There was the prospect of a field, at once wide and profitable, being opened out for the adventurous youths desirous of escaping from the struggle of existence, which is the ordinary lot of an overcrowded population. An opportunity was being afforded for the expansion of British commerce and manufactures which was greedily availed of at the expense and, in some instances, the extinction of Indian industries. That despotism, however benevolent may have been its intentions towards India, served England well cannot be denied. But it will also have to be admitted that an absolute rule was for a time essential in the interests of India. A prey to foreign

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invaders and torn by internal distensions, a strong hand was needed to secure peace within and from without. But while on the one hand, despotism reigned rampant, on the other hand, the rulers were busy writing its epitaph. For they deliberately and with full knowledge of the consequences introduced a system of education which was bound to overthrow in time the absolute rule of those to whom was committed the destiny of India. And it is the recognition of the fact that the time has now arrived for substituting something better for the decaying fabric of a system of government adapted only to obsolete conditions that redounds to the credit of the English nation.

Self-government we want, and the boon will soon be granted to us. Whether it will satisfy our demands or our expectations we need not pause to discuss here, for once we are started on the road to it nothing can keep us back and sooner or later we will reach the goal. The tide has set in and no human hand can roll it back. But what is self-government? To put it shortly and simply, it is the administration of the public affairs of a country by the people. It is distinguished from autocracy where a single person exercises uncontrolled authority, and from an oligarchy where the supreme power is placed in the hands of a few persons and a despotism in which no place can be found for the will of the people. The present Government of India comes under the last named category and a strong desire is expressed that it should be modified so as to allow the people some voice in the direction of affairs. For securing this, we are entitled to utilize every form of legitimate agitation ranging from mild expostulation to the employment of language that is forcible and emphatic. But a person turns up and says: 'Why

plead or agitate, there is a trick as old as the hills, known in India by the name of *dharna*, which is less irksome and more effective. All one has need to do is to lie on his back and decline to budge till what he wants is granted or what he wishes to be removed is put out of the way. Verily, passive resistance has not even the saving grace of originality; it is *dharna* of old in a western polish. The parallel does not end here. The indigenous article was utilized by fakirs who had earned the reputation of living in the odour of sanctity, its modern substitute is being played for what it is worth by a man who bears a saintly character and who by certain achievements, wherein pure unselfishness and a genuine desire to benefit mankind played a conspicuous part, has earned the reputation of a saint. When he tells the people they are lacking in experience and he has abundance of it and to spare he is by no means romancing; when he tells them they talk a good deal, but his privilege it is to fast and to pray, he is fortified with the conviction that it is easier to pray than it is to reason and persuade and convince, and that to persons with a weak digestion a little fasting is equal to a pint of patent medicines, apart from the accretion it unintentionally brings to one's piety; when he tells them that they are helpless when beset with trials and adversities, but that he has a specific which is an infallible remedy for all the ills in creation, he is convinced he is imparting an absolute truth and in the efficacy of which he entertains a profound belief, and when he appeals to the people to surrender their will to his and to follow him implicitly he does it in all simplicity and in the assurance that he is providing their political salvation. And the people vie with each other in the imitation of the master's

simplicity and unbounded faith. Never mind if he commits mistakes which produce incalculable mischief, is he not prompt in acknowledging them in all humility and if suffering has arisen thereby is he not ready to undergo a seventy-two hours' fast and even to wear the crown of martyrdom?

If this means anything it is the proposed substitution of autocracy for despotism. It invites us to throw ourselves from the frying pan into the fire. And this is to be the net result of our proud boast that the country is now alive to a sense of its political consciousness. Where was the necessity for deputations of our leading politicians to undertake a long and tedious journey to perform the herculean task of enlightening the British public, which

a man not sure has any particular desire to be enlightened, about the woes with which India is afflicted and during their spare moments to throw mud at each other? The mud-throwing process could just as well have been carried on here, and as to the woes of India it is suggested there is just as good a chance of these being mitigated by indulging in a few fads at the instance of an individual who has his own panacea for all the ills of humanity. In fact Mr. Gandhi has stated: 'It is my firm belief that we shall obtain salvation only through suffering and not by reforms dropping on us from England, no matter how unstintingly they might be granted.' We need not question his honesty or impute to him that he is intentionally trading on the credulity of others, but that is precisely the effect of his propaganda. When he tells the women who are touching his feet and looking at him with adoring eyes that they had better leave off spinning yarns of one kind and take to spinning yarns of another kind his gospel



is worthy of acceptance, but when he is marching at the head of a procession with his heart filled with sorrow at some iniquitous act of omission or commission on the part of Government, and the rabble gets out of hand and indulges in fooleries of sorts even to the extent of committing serious breaches of the law, he has trespassed in a domain reserved for the practical politician and in which a saint and visionary is entirely out of place. Here we are breaking our heads to get some grievance redressed or some right adjusted. Reams of manuscript eloquence are hurled at the head of an official offender and wise heads meet in conclave to devise the line of action to be adopted by the representatives of the people who will soon be charged with the administration of the affairs of the nation. And in steps Mr. Gandhi and starts a fresh tune and expects his puppets to dance to that tune. It may be that it is an excellent tune but with it should also be considered the fact that he may thereby be making his devotees ridiculous in the eyes of the world and, indeed, prejudicing in a general way their material or political prospects.

The time has arrived for us seriously to consider where we are drifting to. Do we really want self-government or do we want autocracy? Whether it is of a saint or a sinner it matters not, for the one can do as much mischief as the other. If it is autocracy we want, let us be straightforward about it and stop this outcry for self-determination and political progress. Passive resistance has its uses and its abuses. It may be an ideal remedy in one case and it may deal death and destruction in another case. If the united voice of the people, after due deliberation, deems, under certain circumstances, a resort to it to be desirable as a forlorn hope it may be acted upon,



but as a specific for all diseases, to be used in season and out of season, it savours very much of the nostrum, ordinarily concocted by a quack. Then comes the question as to the right of the quack to thrust his remedies down the throats of others, never mind if he entertains a genuine belief in their efficacy. In spite of his saintly character, of his past services and of his good intentions, the public at large are entitled to tell Mr. Gandhi in plain terms that he ought not to deal with political questions in respect to which he has given indisputable evidence that they are beyond his competence and that of any other man whose chief dogma is the propagation of truth and who is unable to take into account the actualities and realities of this world, which is by no means overflowing with righteousness and with righteous people. The public has every right to protect itself from the mischief that is being committed by any man, saint or sinner. Some months ago, when dealing with the Punjab disturbances, while I in no way minimized my opposition to the Rowlatt Act, I gave certain cogent reasons for arriving at the conclusion that the application of passive resistance in connection with the Rowlatt Act is both in theory and in practice as illogical as it is indefensible, and strikes at the root of those principles on which rests the whole fabric of law and order. The mischief that had been wrought was so great that even Mr. Gandhi stood aghast at the excesses of those who were marching under the banner of satyagraha. He, therefore, decided to suspend its operations for a time, but later on, announced that they would be renewed in the form of civil disobedience after a couple of months, as he expected during this period the Government to make such a disposition of troops all over the

country that a breach of the public peace would then be well nigh impossible. To this also I took exception, for I could not see the logic of solemnly adjuring the people to break all laws and when they did so and some under the impulse of the moment or through sheer perversity took to committing excesses, asking the Government to shoot them down. I, therefore, proposed that instead of troops being called into requisition all those who were inclined to play the fool, never mind at whose instance, should be quietly taken to the water pump to have their heads cooled, a process to be repeated every day till completely cured. But there is no limit to the mischief unpractical persons are capable of committing. While I was, in all seriousness, combating the theory of Government that a good part of India was in open rebellion and that the disorders in the country were due to a conspiracy of the educated classes who, it was alleged, were the instigators of the violent crimes committed by unruly mobs, I was surprised to find Mr. Gandhi issuing manifestos of all sorts, bewailing his own monumental ignorance of the forces that were at work amongst the people and imputing their excesses to a carefully planned organization and stating he believed for certain that 'some educated and well-informed man or men had a hand in them.' Sir Michael O'Dwyer is doing no more than repeating this in stronger language.

But the good sense of the people was not slow in asserting itself, and civil disobedience had to given up as the ordinary mind could not grasp what it meant or what end it was likely to serve. The Rowlatt Act is in a state of suspended animation, but it is certainly not passive resistance that has brought this about. We then come to the

17th October which was to be spent by the Mahomedans in prayer and fasting in connection with the Khilafat. That they should organize such a day to evince their disappointment and sorrow for the fate of Turkey does them every credit, and that Hindus should sympathize with them is evidence of the deep sentiment of unity which characterizes the present day relations of the two communities. But why Mr. Gandhi should foist on this his hobby for *hartal* is beyond comprehension. A practical man would have given some thought to the serious consideration that, by enjoining on the Hindus the observance of this day and asking them to close their shops, though compulsion of any kind was deprecated, he was exposing such of them as did not do this to the ill-will of their Mahomedan neighbours. Any how the injunction of Mr. Gandhi was more honoured in its breach than in its observance, and it is entirely due to the good sense of the Moslems that it gave rise to no resentment. We now come to the last and the most serious of Mr. Gandhi's blunderings. He is now proposing that Indians should abstain from taking part in the peace celebration as a protest against the impending danger to the Khalifate.

Mr. Gandhi must know the trend of events of the past five years, as he has so keen a desire to dabble in political matters. Was the war started by Germany a just and holy war, or was it the intention of its rulers to establish a tyranny over the whole world to feed their lust for power and wealth? Did India lend a hand in this desperate conflict merely at the bidding of England, or were its people convinced that they were fighting to overcome a great evil which might indeed have overwhelmed them? When Hindus and Mahomedans and Christians solemnly

put forth their prayers for the success of the Allied arms, were they sincere in their devotions or playing a part as hypocrites? During the progress of the war has India not had to suffer in a variety of ways in spite of the fact that the scene of the struggles was thousands of miles away and was it not likely that their sufferings would have been increased a hundredfold if the issue had taken a different turn? If our days of doubt and despondency are over have we no cause for congratulation and rejoicing? After the sacrifices India has voluntarily made in giving the best of its manhood and the best of its wealth, has it no interest in the discomfiture of the powers of darkness that had been let loose? Has India no concern in the affairs of England that it can adopt a detached attitude, while the whole world except the vanquished is jubilant and elated at the success of the Allied arms? Have we no desire to improve the relations that exist between the people of this country and a nation which after all is still ruling over India and from which much is expected, especially at this critical period? From every point of view then we have reason to rejoice, not that we are called upon to do so, but that we are giving expression to a natural feeling, while at the same time we furnish evidence of the fact that we are not insensible to the obligations that have been imposed on us by the inclusion of India in the comity of nations. It is therefore to be hoped that people of all communities, rich and poor, will unite in the celebration of an occasion which appeals to all alike.

But it will be asked if the Mahomedans can do this in the face of the uncertainty about the fate of the Khalifate. It would be wrong to doubt the genuineness of the Moslem



feeling or to minimize its intensity. But there seems to be some confusion of ideas which needs to be cleared up. The victory of the Allied arms signifies primarily a defeat of Germany and it is that which is being celebrated. When Turkey was in a way forced to enter the war the fact was very much deplored by the Mahomedans of India, who were by no means free from apprehensions as to its ultimate fate. For all that it was Moslem troops of India and Africa who largely contributed to the overthrow of the enemy and now what they were fighting for is achieved it seems somewhat illogical to refuse to rejoice in the cessation of a war iniquitous in itself, carried on with the utmost savagery and accompanied with the probability that if it had been prolonged the fate of Turkey might have been worse than it is at present. To refuse to rejoice with England is to throw doubts on the efforts it has made to mitigate the rigour of the terms to be meted out to the Ottoman Government. The Viceroy, there is reason to believe, has urged on the British Government the importance of the issues involved, and it is a well-known fact that Mr. Montagu, the Maharaja of Bikanir and Lord Sinha have in a whole-hearted manner used the opportunity with which they were favoured for pleading the cause of Turkey. But its future is in the hands of the Allies and it is anything but clear if the attitude assumed by the Mahomedans of India is likely to improve matters.

If nevertheless they cannot see their way to join the peace celebrations, it is a matter much to be regreted, but no pressure ought to be brought to bear on them to act otherwise. And for the matter of that no pressure ought to be placed on any community or individual, but so far as the Hindus are concerned it is obvious that those



who abstain will most likely be actuated by one of two reasons ; and these are either the injunctions of one who has come to exercise a masterful influence over their minds, or that some of them entertain for the English people in general and the bureaucracy in particular so great a dislike that they have no desire under any circumstances to come into close quarters with them. There is something intelligible in the last named reason, but the subject cannot be properly dealt with here, and as to the other I would protest, and that strongly, against the autocracy of any individual, never mind how great a saint he be, if I was sure there was a disposition to recognize Mr. Gandhi as a dictator. We shall very soon see that this is not the case. But a curious view has been presented to me by an Englishman with considerable experience of India and its peoples and by a level-headed Hindu. Both credit Mr. Gandhi with being a simple minded person, which fact, it is alleged, is being taken advantage of by designing persons to make him their tool. The Englishman was of opinion that he had been got hold of by persons who bore no good will to the Government to administer it a slap by deprecating any participation in the peace celebrations. On the other hand, the Hindu felt inclined to suspect that some Englishman, resenting the present amicable relations between the two communities, had put him up to issue this manifesto fully aware that the Hindus as a body would pay no heed to it and thus an element of discord would be introduced. Surely this is enough to make Mr. Gandhi to ponder and to refrain in the future from interfering in matters which are evidently beyond his grasp. This is not the time for us to be drifting aimlessly devoid of any sense of responsibility. Since the above lines were written a good deal

has transpired which is not altogether reassuring as to the future. Perhaps no people are so susceptible to hero worship as are Indians, which accounts for the dominating influence exercised by certain individuals. But Mrs. Besant has been dethroned and Mr. Gandhi and Paudit Madan Mohan Malaviya found at the Amritsar Congress. that their views did not receive implicit acceptance, an indication that the autocracy of individuals has no permanent basis. But as this was due to the transfer of allegiance to the autocracy of others it is not altogether a very encouraging feature.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### ROCKS AHEAD.

In what shape the Reform Bill will emerge from Parliament it is difficult to say in the face of the contradictory views that have been expressed, some of them being extremely optimistic and others extremely pessimistic. But of this there can be no doubt that a new departure in the method of administering the affairs of India is inevitable, and that the people will not be as destitute as they are at present of a voice in the Government of the country. To what extent the existing institutions will be liberalized we shall be enlightened in the course of a few weeks. But whatever be the nature of the reforms, there is always the prospect before us of so utilising the constitutional changes that are impending and the opportunity that will be afforded us for working out our political salvation, that we may be incessantly progressing instead of retrogressing, till eventually we arrive at the goal of complete self-government. We have been so busy urging our demands that there has been some disposition to overlook the rocks ahead that may wreck our frail bark or at any rate render its safe navigation not such a facile process as some easy-going people imagine it to be. 'Give us', we say, 'provincial autonomy, give us fiscal autonomy and give us some little power in the Central Government and we shall be happy.' But what about the future? Are we sure it will be all plain sailing for us? Are there no shoals and quicksands that may prove our undoing unless we steer a prudent course so as to avoid them?

It is curious how airily some of us are inclined to treat the bureaucracy which is exercising almost uncontrolled authority over us at present. 'Let our heritage be decreed unto us and we will dispose them of soon enough,' it is said by some. I am not so sure of that. The man in possession has always an advantage and sometimes is able to resist all efforts to oust him. The civil service is undoubtedly in possession at present and has no special desire to be ousted. The Secretary of State and the Viceroy assumed a little too much when they announced the loyal acquiescence of its members to the changes about to be introduced which implied a practical surrender of their powers. It is even doubtful how far the principle of the Pronouncement of August 1917 is accepted by them, and the fact that it has not been openly repudiated is merely evidence of the loyalty of the servant unwilling to flout the orders or the wishes of his master. This is made quite clear in the evidence of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who stated before the Joint Committee on Reforms that he 'accepted the Pronouncement of August 20th only as a Government servant but would prefer autocracy pure and simple.' Sir John Hewett was more emphatic in his views, which were indeed so reactionary that he felt ashamed to give utterance to them. When asked point-blank by Mr. Montagu whether he agreed with the Announcement of August 20th, he first inquired whether he was bound to answer the question, but as the Secretary of State was persistent he confessed he would rather not disclose his views on the point. Every answer he gave, we are told, disclosed a root and branch hostility to any real change in the constitution. The evidence given before the Hunter Commission has elicited the fact that the bureaucracy in

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the Punjab made a most desperate and determined stand for the preservation of their power, their prestige and their privileges. If in so doing they shocked the conscience of England which has vehemently repudiated their outrageous conduct, it is but one of the fortunes of war. They played for a high stake and in so doing over-reached themselves and brought dishonour to the British name. The cry in England, "what amends can we make" is as genuine as it is pathetic.

It is quite clear that one of the rocks we have to steer against is the opposition or, even if it does not go so far, the lack of co-operation on the part of the Civil Service. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who by the way represented the views of five Local Governments, has stated specifically that Europeans would serve under Indian members of the Council, but would not like to serve under Indian ministers, and the reason he advanced was that these being inexperienced would not command the confidence of the services. He could not very well say that Europeans would not serve under Indian members of Council as his successor in the Punjab, Sir Edward Maclagan, had worked most amicably with Sir Sankaran Nair, the Educational Member, and Sir William Vincent, whose personality in the Government of India is so strongly accentuated at present, was brought originally from Bihar by Sir Ali Imam to act as his legislative secretary. Now what is the real reason for the reluctance of the Europeans to serve under an Indian minister? The absence of administrative experience cannot count for much in the face of the fact that Lord Sinha, Sir Ali Imam and Sir Sankaran Nair were admittedly successful in the positions they held, in spite of the lack of any previous official experience. I go



further, two of them have given practical evidence of the fact that they entertained such a high conception of their duties, which is an ordinary adjunct of English public life but is not so pronounced in the Indian Civil Service, that they gave up their high positions rather than work under conditions that were not consistent with self-respect. Lord Sinha and Sir Sankaran Nair challenge comparison with the elite of the Civil Service, such as Sir James Meston and Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who stuck to their posts in spite of being subjected to a serious rebuff and humiliation. The ex-satrap of the Punjab has repudiated that racial distinction had anything to do with the reluctance to serve under an Indian minister, though there is strong evidence of the existence of this feeling. But taking his repudiation for what it is worth, there remains only one consideration and that is that the animus of some members of the bureaucracy against the educated classes is so great that they would prefer to avoid any kind of contact with them. Unfortunately there is a similar feeling on the part of some of the educated classes against the bureaucracy. These are the extremists on both sides, who allow their feelings to get the better of their judgment and so paint the other side in the darkest of hues. Before leaving India Sir Michael O'Dwyer had his full say about the educated classes, *alias* the agitators, and he did not spare them in his evidence before the Joint Committee and stigmatised them as implacable opponents of the British administration.

But happily such extremists are rare, and, as has already been indicated, the antagonism to the educated classes is not so pronounced outside the Civil Service. A member

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of the service in the Madras Presidency has pointedly drawn attention to the fact that the juniors were by no means disposed to fall in entirely with the views of the seniors. It is quite possible that when the present-day leaders, with their traditions of luxuriating in absolute rule, have passed away their successors may see matters in a different light and be disposed to act on the injunction of one of their own class, Mr. Bernard Houghton, who implores them that they should 'now stand aside and in the interest of that country they have served so long truly make over the dominion to other hands. Not in dishonour, but in honour proudly, as ship-builders who deliver to seamen the completed ship may they now yield up the direction of India. For it is the inherent defects of the system, which no body of men, however devoted, can remove which renders inevitable the change to a new policy. By a frank recognition of these defects they can furnish a supreme instance alike of loyalty to the land of their adoption and of a true and self-denying statesmanship'. That Englishmen are entitled to place to their credit a high character and sound common sense must in all fairness be admitted, and if the bureaucracy in India shows a disposition to engage in an unseemly struggle for what it has come to consider its vested rights, it can only be at the expense of these characteristics—a suicidal policy which will result in bringing about a premature collapse. The part recently played by the executive in the Punjab, never mind what the provocation was, will never be repeated again, for when in later years the history of the period comes to be written, no unprejudiced and impartial writer will fail to put on record the fact that sentiments were expressed and a line of conduct was

pursued which sounded the death-knell of bureaucratic rule. It has brought together the most discordant elements to coalesce in the desire to be rid of this rule at the earliest opportunity. But here again the high character and sound common sense of the British race stand out in broad relief, and Lord Ronaldshay, Sir George Lloyd and Mr. Barron, by the exercise of tact and true statesmanship, redeemed the reputation of the nation which they represent in India. The adaptability to existing circumstances is a phenomenal characteristic of the English people and we would be wise instead of planning to be rid altogether of the bureaucracy to try to work in co-operation with them and the likelihood is we will not be disappointed. And this I say in spite of the disclosures in the Punjab.

Another obstacle which stands in the way of a full and speedy achievement of our aims and aspirations may be entirely of our own creating, and that is the lack of fitness for undertaking the onerous task of self-government. We may indulge in any amount of tall talk, but after all the result will depend on the practical evidence that is forthcoming of our capacity to administer the affairs of the country. To do this with any appreciable amount of success we need to have a lively sense of the community of interests, to cultivate a unity of purpose, to be ready for the exercise of self-sacrifice, tolerance and forbearance, and by patience and perseverance to make up for lack of administrative experience. For the last named drawback the English bureaucracy is entirely responsible, for they have so far deliberately kept the people under leading strings and deprived them of any opportunity to act on their own initiative or to bear the burden of any responsi-

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bility. One of the conditions of despotic rule is that everything is done 'for' the people and nothing 'by' the people. Given the opportunity and the will to achieve, we can overcome the lack of experience, though we may have many a slip and many a stumble placed to our credit. English statesmen when placed at the head of a department have usually no experience to start with, but often turn out to be brilliant administrators. We need not despond. But even with the opportunity at our disposal and a fixed goal in view, we may find ourselves stranded by failing to check our mutual antagonisms. To start with, we have an inherent disadvantage to contend against. India, unfortunately for itself, is not a nation. It is made up of an aggregate of communities of diverse races, religions and creeds, different from one another in education and civilization and split up into innumerable castes which by their exclusiveness give evidence that they recognize no community of interest, and indeed on the slightest provocation or pretence are ready to accentuate in every method possible their mutual antagonisms. But it is urged that the growing spirit of nationality will overcome their shortcomings. Even a superficial analysis of this new spirit, the contemplation of which is so comforting to our souls, is calculated to disillusionize us to some extent and to moderate the transports of our enthusiasm. Why and how this spirit has come so strongly into evidence affords an interesting but not entirely reassuring study. That it is intensely patriotic cannot be gainsaid, but the genuineness and extent of the feeling of nationality is subject to certain limitations.

The history of India for the past few centuries furnishes ample evidence of the negation of any idea of



nationality, the most striking of which is to be found in the fact that a handful of foreigners were able to establish a rule which while exploiting the country for what it was worth made up for it by providing certain requirements due entirely to the absence of nationality. It has been said that the village communities of ancient India represent the beginnings of self-government, so that we have a fine basis on which to build our superstructure, and that the traditions, the literature and the precepts of Islam indicate that there are no people in the world more democratic than the Mahomedans. All this is true with reference to the Hindus and the Moslems taken separately but will not necessarily apply to the present complex conditions of Indian life, when conflicting interests are so pronounced that to reconcile them is not an easy matter. Under such circumstances, the growth of the national spirit was bound to be slow and its operations were for a time confined to somewhat circumscribed limits. It was a little more than three decades ago, a select band of men, the direct product of British rule in India, with which their fortunes were intimately associated, came forward as the pioneers of this new cult of nationalism. But behind them was a huge population either inert and inarticulate or where disposed to give any evidence of life it was only to stifle the growing national consciousness which was awakening India from her slumber of ages. Small as was the number of those who were so awakened, it was diminished considerably by some important defections. Indifference was a factor that had to be reckoned with, and who can forget how in the early days of the Congress, Mr. Hume, who was its founder, hurled his anathemas against those who were disposed to be slack in their support of this movement.

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Then there was the active hostility of a community with a population of seventy millions to contend against. They did their level best to pull down the structure which was being erected by the professors of the new gospel of nationality, who exceeded them in numbers and excelled them in education and in their desire to secure the political advancement of India. The Educational Conference was a memorial set up to signify to the world that the Mahomedans had no part or lot with the agitators who were preaching the new-fangled doctrine that certain reforms were urgently needed in the administration of the affairs of the country. In adopting this attitude no pretence was at any time made that it was the outcome of any spirit of nationality or that the interests of the nation were being served. It was a sectional moment, actuated by selfish motives and for the time being it served the purpose of securing certain favours from Government. But about a decade ago, there were indications that the partnership between the English rulers and the Mahomedans was not running very smoothly. The young Muslim party were getting restive. They were not willing to be content with favours ; they wanted political rights and above all were apprehensive that the Hindus by means of agitation would secure these to the exclusion of themselves. Thus came into existence the Muslim League, a purely political organization as distinguished from the Educational Conference, which ostentatiously eschewed politics. But the curious feature about this League was that the primary reason for bringing it into existence was the protection of Mahomedan interests against anticipated Hindu ascendancy. It was therefore not a national but a sectional movement. If by their exertions the Hindus secured

some plums the Moslems wanted their share and a pretty big share too. Just about this time there was some expansion of the elective system in connection with the municipalities and district boards, which was followed by a general scramble between the two communities, the Mahomedans obtaining the best part of the loot in the shape of separate representation and a disproportionate share of the seats from the point of view of population. After a few years of existence, the League expanded its propaganda to one of co-operation with the other communities for the attainment of self-government. Before this development took place, a compact was arrived at between the Hindu political leaders and the young Muslim party holding extreme views, which had captured the League and practically excluded the old and conservative members. By this arrangement communal representation was assured to this community in all self-governing institutions and the number of seats in the various Councils was fixed out of all proportion to its population, in respect to which protests are still being made by some Hindus. This in itself is an abiding evidence of the absence of a spirit of nationality, from the point of view of a complete unity of interests and the exercise of mutual tolerance and forbearance. The excluded members who form a large and influential minority are still wedded to the idea of retaining a separate existence and have started Associations of sorts all over the country to protect their interests. It is obvious that the common cause made by the two communities is to serve a particular political purpose and is but a broken reed to rely upon.

I am perhaps laying myself open to the charge of inconsistency, for in some of the previous articles I have

laid special emphasis on the growing spirit of nationality in India. The awakening of India to political consciousness to which testimony is being given on all sides resolves itself in the desire that the people should have a share in the administration of the country. It is practically a revolt against the present absolute form of government, though not against English rule, which is indispensable in the present condition of India. The tide of national feeling is subject to certain important limitations. It demands a transfer of power from the present administrators of the country, but to whom? There lies the weakness of our position. If it could be said in a broad and general way to the representatives of the people elected by them regardless of race or creed or class the principle of self-determination would be easy of application. But unfortunately the devolution of power is to be in favour of Hindus, Mahomedans, Sikhs, non-Brahmins, Christians, Europeans, land-holders and indeed a number of other bodies of men, all of whom are clamouring for separate representation. While I am writing this I find the Hindus of the Punjab and the rural population of Madras busy in the assertion of their claims to special representation. That communal representation is based on mutual distrust, that it is subversive of the very essence of responsible government and that it will perpetuate class and sectarian divisions cannot be disputed. That it may produce discord in self-governing institutions and in the end defeat the very object for which they were brought into existence is a contingency which ought not to be ignored. The Indo-British Association is the most formidable opponent of constitutional reform. It has taken non-Brahmans under its protection; it would be no exaggeration

to say it has brought them into existence. The reason is obvious. The very fact that communal representation is favoured by the Association ought to put us on our guard. The newly formed alliance between the political leaders of the Hindus and the Moslems is a matter which should afford gratification to all those interested in the progress of India, but as it was the result of a bargain its stability depends a good deal on the disposition of the parties to continue the bargain. And as to this, the bureaucracy will not be slow in making what capital they can out of it. They have done so before and if they do it again it will be on the same plea—the welfare of the country. Strong efforts have just been made, which were almost successful, to hold the annual Moslem League meeting at some place other than that where the Congress is to meet. The dissolution of the newly formed partnership will undoubtedly afford relief to some ill-disposed persons. The evidence of recent events is certainly in favour of the view that the relations between the two communities are now more amicable than before, but is not much of it due to political wire-pulling, apart from which, our experience tells us, there is a good deal of lee-way to make up in the everyday affairs of life, political, social and material ; and not only as regards Hindus and Mahomedans, but as regards others also who will have an active interest in the self-governing institutions of the future.

Another rock we have to steer clear from is the growing tendency that is so much in evidence these days of allowing political animosities to run riot. When people come to think for themselves it is but natural that there should be a difference of opinion ; hence a cleavage was



inevitable amongst the leaders of public opinion and there is nothing to complain of in the fact that the younger generation should be more advanced in their views and should desire to move faster than those who are older and more conservative in their ideas. England has been nurtured and has thriven under the party system and the existence of political parties in India is taken as evidence that it is at last awakening from her slumber of ages and has so far assimilated western ideas of Government that the splitting up into groups of the *intelligentia* has followed as a natural sequence. But it should be borne in mind that there are two strictly defined parties already in existence, the one composed of the bureaucracy, fortified with power and prestige and opposed to progress, especially when it affects what they consider are their vested rights, and the other of the nationalists, to use a general term with reference to those who desire to be released from official leading strings and to work out their political salvation. To enable these to cope with reactionary demands on their part indomitable courage and perseverance, and above all that they should present a solid phalanx and not emasculate themselves with internal jealousies and dissensions and needless bickerings. And if a difference of opinion is unavoidable it need not lead to the exhibition of a spirit of intolerance and of a bitterness of feeling which renders co-operation impossible. But when this descends to abuse and vituperation and misrepresentation and when considerations of age, experience and past services are flouted and ignored and the worst of motives are imputed it makes one apprehensive of the future of India. Political rivalries must be taken into account but not at the expense of what is proper and



decent and conducive to the interests of the country. A wave of extremism has passed over the land and has captured the imagination of the younger generation. A great responsibility rests on the leaders so to carry out their propaganda as to avoid the imparting of a distorted idea of the political condition of India and the means by which salvation can be obtained. The progressive party in Egypt and in Turkey had their day of triumph, but the sequel has been other than what had been anticipated. Extremism, unless kept in check, may sow the seed, especially in untutored and inexperienced minds, of the worst of all diseases the tendency to look for relief to revolutionary methods, than which no greater disaster can befall a country, as is emphasized by the past history of Europe and the dark deeds which in these days have brought about the downfall of certain countries and degraded them to a position beyond the pale of civilization.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE RACIAL PROBLEM.

The authors of the Reforms Report deprecate the discussion of the racial question as calculated to increase the existing bitterness between the English and Indians, and the hope is expressed that in course of time their relations, which are considerably strained at present, will be appreciably improved. But recent events in the Punjab have accentuated the worst features of this problem, and as it involves issues the most momentous in connection with British rule in India and the future welfare of this country, it needs to be faced boldly instead of being quietly ignored. To meet the pressing demand for constitutional reform English statesmen have formulated a scheme whereby Indian Ministers will have certain functions to discharge. Sir Michael O'Dwyer says Europeans will be averse to serving under them, than which there can be no more barefaced assertion of racial prejudice. English officials in the Punjab have been accused of conduct that has aroused universal indignation, but they are members of a nation that has given incontestable evidence of the possession of high ideals by acts of conspicuous self-sacrifice and devotion to the cause of humanity. The disclosures before the Disorders Inquiry Committee demonstrate that racial feeling was largely accountable for the campaign of frightfulness. When an Indian politician goes so far as to express the view that he would like to dispense with the bureaucracy in India,

though he knows that such a step is not desirable in the interests of the country, it only indicates he is so fed up with the racial airs put on by some of this class that he would be glad to be rid of them at any cost. Go where we will the racial question obtrudes itself, and is not altogether a question of colour. At any big railway station will be found a dark Anglo-Indian who, on the strength of an English name and an English garb, treats Indians, far removed from himself in colour, in culture and in respectability, with the utmost contumely and this because he fancies he is a member of the ruling race, quietly ignoring the fact that he is paid off in his own coin by one who is a few shades fairer than himself and who again is looked upon as a curiosity by the real European. Much of the alleged disaffection ascribed to Indians would disappear if this racial question could be solved. There are indications that the process of solution will soon commence and credit for this is largely due to Mr. Montagu.

India, before the dawn of history, was convulsed by the operations of race. The Aryans after their migration to this country evolved the caste system in their anxiety for the preservation of their race and culture, and to a large extent they did succeed. And what is the non-Brahman question of South India but the revolt of a large community, stamped with the badge of inferiority, against the domination of a handful of foreigners? The distinction between Aryan and non-Aryan was never lost sight of and racial antagonism is still at work, and is evidenced by the rigidity of the caste system from which even Indian Christians are not free. As we go further north there is noticed an increasing laxity owing to the racial

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intermixture, which was unavoidable by reason of the Aryan immigrants being forced to form alliances with the aboriginal inhabitants owing to the paucity of their own women. But as between the English and the bulk of the Indians of Upper India there should be no racial antagonism as they are of the same Aryan stock. The other day in discussing with an American lady the race problem in America, which is accentuated there by the presence of the undesirable Negro, I asked why the Indians from the east were treated differently to the Negro? She replied "are we not members of the same race?" Not long ago, by a judicial decision of one of the American courts the Indians were placed in the category of "white men." And in England also there is an absence of racial feeling which accounts for so many English women marrying Indians, and yet there can be no question of this feeling being most pronounced in India.

That the English when they first came to India were destitute of any racial feeling is evidenced by their having freely fraternised with the indigenous inhabitants. The mixed population bears eloquent testimony to this fact, for it is by no means entirely the outcome of an illicit intercourse. But it is a curious problem that racial feeling is most pronounced in the Eurasian, who by reason of a few drops of European blood in his veins entirely ignores his Indian origin. He treats with contempt those with whom he is most akin, and to speak freely any Indian language is repugnant to him. Lord Bryce writing in "The American Commonwealth" about the growth of race consciousness among the Negroes of the United States draws attention to the "growing sense of race solidarity and a perception that instead of seeking favours from the



whites or trying to cling to their skirts the Negro must go his own way, make his own society, try to stand on his own feet, in the confidence that the more he succeeds in doing this, the more respected he will be. This feeling of race consciousness has in most cases included and now more and more includes the people of mixed blood...that racial consciousness to which I have already referred has been drawing all sections of the African race together, disposing the lighter-coloured, since they can get no nearer to the whites, to identify themselves with the mass of those who belong to their own stock." Just the reverse is the case of the mixed population in India. In spite of slights and affronts the most pointed they cling to the nationality of their English progenitors though these have played but a minor part in bringing them into existence. The advertisement in the newspapers, "none but a pure European need apply" tells its own tale.

It is not that the Eurasian, or Anglo-Indian to give him his new name, has become colour-blind, but he is merely worldly wise. He finds the European as a member of the ruling race dominates over the Indian, who is delegated to a position so inferior as not to permit any mutual intercourse, and he imagines it is his prerogative to act in a similar manner. The racial question then resolves itself finally not into one of colour but to the relations that exist between the ruling race and a subject race, or as it is sometimes put a conquering and a conquered race. But was India really conquered by the English? We look in vain for any battles by which this result was achieved. The merchant adventurers who came out to India so utilised their opportunities at a time when it was torn with internal dissensions that by hiring their



troops which were mostly Indian to one or other of the contending powers or factions they were rewarded with slices of the subjugated country. To start with, they administered these for and on behalf of the donors till these, by reason of their misrule, having gone the way of all flesh, the enterprising foreigners were left in the full enjoyment of their reward. I take it that a beneficent Providence had intended England to be the instrument for introducing peace and order and good government in India, so that in the fulness of time it could work out its political salvation. But it was never intended that the aliens should appropriate to themselves the status and privileges of conquerors and reduce the indigenous population to their present subordinate position as hewers of wood and drawers of water.

In so acting the English have been true to their tradition. The desire for domination and the spirit of exclusiveness have ever been most pronounced in their own little island. The masses there were originally no better than serfs in the feudal ages, and it took centuries for them to emerge from their thralldom and to secure their freedom and the political rights they now enjoy. And even in these democratic days there is a broad line of demarcation dividing the aristocracy from the rest of the population. A great gulf intervenes between the professional class and the tradesmen, never mind how wealthy and cultured the latter may be. There is an artificial meaning attached to the word "gentlemen," to enter which class is the ambition of those who have been made to feel what it is to be out of it. Practically, social distinctions provoke almost similar sentiments to those aroused by racial feelings. Herein the English differ from the oriental nations.

The Mahomedans came to India as conquerors, but they created no racial animosity. They were religious enthusiasts, who were desirous of bringing the whole world to the feet of the prophet of Islam. They received large accessions to their community partly by forcible measures but mainly by proclaiming the political equality of mankind and by freely fraternising with the conquered peoples. Go to any mosque on a Friday and you will find high and low, rich and poor standing side by side engaged in their devotions. Go to an English church and it will be enough for the clergyman to jump off his pulpit to find a clerk trying to occupy a seat usually reserved for those high in office. And if an Indian Christian ventured to do this there would be a total collapse of the service. In India official position regulates the social position of a man. The son of a tradesman if he gets into the Civil Service will ignore the existence of the son of a gentleman who happens to hold an inferior position in some other department and whose nod of recognition at home used to give him comfort for a whole week.

The eagerness with which some Englishmen have been making capital out of the caste system in India is somewhat amusing. To serve a political end, that of hampering constitutional reform, the European Association in India and the Indo-British Association in England have started a campaign against the Brahmans of South India. Only the other day the English Civil Surgeon of Amritsar, giving evidence before the Disorders Inquiry Committee, stated that he was a democrat and that he considered a sweeper just as good as a Brahman, but if the subject had been followed up and he had been asked whether the Brahman was as good as an Englishman I wonder

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what the answer would have been. And yet this officer is not an Indian hater. I met him only once and curiously enough it was at dinner at the house of an Indian gentleman, who is now enjoying the King's hospitality, being one of the victims of the crusade started in the Punjab against political agitators. The English caste-haters have started a new caste in India, and that is the ruling caste; which is as much distinguished by the desire to be dominant and exclusive as are the Brahmans in South India. These have assumed certain privileges in that part of India, but the English assert many privileges in all parts of India. They claim the exclusive right to hold certain appointments, not by reason of any special fitness but as rulers of the country, and this in the face of repeated assurances that the disabilities of Indians have been entirely removed. The law professes to make no distinction between one man and another, but British born subjects have special courts fitted up for their benefit. Where an Indian has killed a European he has been hanged for it, but where a European causes the death of an Indian it has usually been found that the latter has been suffering from an enlarged spleen. I had the privilege of being fined Rs. 200 for having defamed a medical officer who had stated in a *post mortem* report that a punkah cooly who had been killed by a European soldier and had died had been suffering from double pneumonia. My offence consisted in allowing as Editor of a journal a correspondent to express his surprise that a man suffering from double pneumonia should have been able to pull a barrack room punkah, which was by no means a light performance. The Indian clergyman of a North India station often officiates for the Chaplain

in his absence, but his daughters have been refused admission in the parish school which receives a grant-in-aid from Government. A European goes to a station and calls on the Europeans but leaves out the Indians, though some of them are holding high appointments. An Indian official goes to a new station and he must pay his respects to the European officials who seldom return his call. In the early days of British rule an Indian made a salaam to a European as a token of respect and esteem. Now a days, certainly so far as the educated classes are concerned, these feelings are very much at a discount. The salaam has therefore come to signify the recognition that the one is the inferior of the other, and the number of Europeans and Anglo-Indians having also increased it is usually omitted, and is resented by the latter. The Punjab disorders brought this out in broad relief, for opportunity was taken of the martial law to decree that Indians "riding on animals or in wheeled conveyances will alight and those carrying open and raised umbrellas shall lower them", and people were actually flogged for omitting to make a salaam. It is needless to give any further illustrations, but it is a matter of general complaint that whenever the Englishman comes into contact with the Indian he is made to realise the inferiority of his position.

In all fairness it should be admitted that a certain class of Indians by their peculiar habits have aroused and encouraged the contemptuous treatment that is now impartially meted out to the whole community. Unfortunately India was for many centuries the happy hunting ground of foreign invaders, with the consequence that a kind of servility has become inherent in a large body of men. Those who possessed power and patronage were

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flattered or a cringing attitude was adopted towards them. To be the exclusive recipients of favour it was essential to keep others out of it, and the most effective method was to indulge in wholesale slander. The Englishman comes to India with an open mind. He is at first puzzled with the behaviour of some Indians with whom he comes into contact, but at last he understands what they are aiming at, with the result that he begins to entertain a contempt for Indian character. By living in this atmosphere he is unable to recognise the fact that there are a good many self-respecting Indians, but that they keep at a respectful distance from him. There can be no question that a good deal of the racial feeling is due to the action of sycophants and toadies. But the most potent cause is the pride of the Englishman that he is a member of the ruling race. It is curious that the people of a democratic country like England should turn out such veritable autocrats, but it was inevitable when according to the traditions of the service each member believed he was a representative of the sovereign. All power was centred in him. His was the privilege not only to control the administration but to shape the policy to be pursued. But in his anxiety for the efficiency of the administration he has been reduced to the position of a machine and has no inclination to cultivate any good relations with the people or to evince any sympathy with the advanced views that are in vogue at present and which would undermine his authority. He has peculiar ideas as to his mission in India, with the result that he has been weighed and has been found wanting.

But English statesmen have passed a verdict that the people are to have a responsible share in the administration



of the country and Mr. Montagu in language that is both clear and emphatic has stated that gradually the Civil Service in India must be reduced to a position analogous to the Civil Service in England. It means the practical dethronement of its members from the proud and exclusive position of rulers. What the effect of this will be on the government of the country is a question quite apart, but of this there can be no doubt that it will in the end result in the cultivation of better relations between the English and Indians. With the representatives of the people in partnership as rulers and a large number of Indians holding high official positions the temptation to assume the airs of an autocrat will have gone. There will be a breach in the citadel of the ruling caste. Englishman will enter the Civil Service with no preconceived notions that they will have to discharge semi-regal functions, but just as those in other departments to perform certain duties for which they will receive an adequate remuneration. Social intercourse is not absolutely essential for the promotion of better relations, though even in this respect their will be a considerable advance. Education is gradually instilling in the minds of Indians a sense of self-respect, and once a Englishman begins to respect an Indian the spirit of exclusiveness and reserve on his part will gradually disappear and be replaced by a feeling of comradeship and sympathy. Let the idea that "we belong to the ruling caste and must keep up our prestige" be weakened and it will be followed by a change in the attitude and demeanour of Europeans towards Indians, and this will react on the greatest Indian-haters, the Anglo-Indians, who will not be ashamed as they are now of their mixed parentage.

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## CHAPTER X.

### 'FRIGHTFULNESS' A SOLVENT OF LOYALTY.

In a series of articles contributed some months ago to the columns of the *Leader* on the present situation, with special reference to the Punjab disturbances, I appealed to the people of England to decide whether the disclosures contained therein, drawn entirely from official sources, reflected any credit on a Christian nation, which prides itself and rightly, on its culture, its justice and its humanity. The London *Times* responds to this appeal by the statement that 'the points that have been raised are worthy of attention, for it is unquestionable that the course of events in the Punjab last spring has stirred deep resentment in the minds of the Indian *intellegentia*.' Since then an authentic account culled from official lips of the sequence of events is available to the public. It abounds in incidents and episodes of such a nature that it will startle and I venture to say will shock the conscience of the people of England. At any rate, it warrants my asking a further question, whether frightfulness is a recognized process of government amongst civilized nations and if it is reckoned a proper incentive to loyalty. In a previous article of the present series. I have tried to elucidate the cause of the prevailing discontent in India and to demonstrate that the charge of disloyalty brought against the educated classes has no real basis, in so far that with rare exceptions no desire has been expressed for an immediate or remote separation from England. The

wave of extremism that is passing over the country goes no further than a desire to obtain for India self-governing institutions under the ægis of the British Crown. If, however, this country is to be governed on principles and methods of which the Punjab has recently afforded some notable samples and which have been unblushingly acknowledged by the authorities concerned, I say with confidence that the loyalty of the people will soon be undermined, and for this the responsibility will rest on the agents of British rule in India.

The Disorders Inquiry Committee is engaged in investigating certain specified matters and as regards those I have no desire to forestall their decision, but the question now under discussion is beyond their purview, for it is outside their province to formulate the method on which India should be governed. While on the one hand English statesmen are willing to set India on her feet on the path of self-government and have obtained for her a place in the League of Nations, on the other hand certain officials in this country, with the view of keeping it in subjection, are resorting to measures of which the English nation and indeed the whole world should be apprised, so as to be able to express an opinion whether they are in consonance with the instincts of a civilized and humane government. Since the above lines were written English public opinion has declared itself, and in no hesitating terms. The *Manchester Guardian* says, 'the shooting at Amritsar is as though a mad man had been let loose to massacre at large.' The *Times* draws 'attention to the profound impression made throughout the country by the disclosures of what happened at Amritsar' and says, 'the public has been shocked by the occurrences and at the

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delay in publishing facts.' The *Daily News* under the heading of 'Frightfulness' states : 'One of the most shocking features of the whole affair is its concealment for eight months.' The attitude of the Labour organ *Daily Herald*, is sufficiently indicated by its heading Imperial Atrocities. The *News* says : 'The impression created must be removed at all costs, if our credit and honour are not to be fatally impaired.' The *Star* says 'it is the darkest stain on the British rule in India' and the *Westminster Gazette* asks 'for the recall of General Dyer and if he is not condemned by the nation he will be condemned by the world.'

It may here be premised that India's loyalty during the European war has been recognized in the most fulsome terms by the English nation and even by its representatives in this country. Punjab carried away the honours by its numerous activities and by sending more than half the troops which were despatched from the whole of India to the various centres of the struggle. Its devotion to the British Crown and the British cause was loudly proclaimed by its ruler, even to the length of giving offence by making an invidious distinction between the achievements of the various provinces. It was held up as a model to the rest of India, for special efforts had been made to preserve it from the contamination of political agitators from outside, the entry of some of whom in the Punjab was officially forbidden, or the corruption by means of seditious literature, which was freely proscribed, to the extent of excluding certain journals which have a large circulation in other parts of India. But this did not secure its immunity from the tension of feeling which prevailed all over the country amongst the educated classes.



The Announcement of August 1917 brought some mitigation, for the unrest was replaced by an eager expectation of a speedy fruition of the constitutional reforms that had been promised. Suddenly there was a change in the political atmosphere of India due to the agitation respecting the Rowlatt Act and the unfortunate and ill-advised foisting on it of passive resistance. Disturbances more or less serious broke out in several provinces and were put down by the Government by a resort to physical force and at the expense of several lives in each of the places concerned. Order was everywhere restored in the course of a day or two and even at Amritsar, which was the scene of some deplorable outrages, these were committed at the very start and there was no repetition of them after the rioters were dispersed by the military. The executive authorities in Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi took no retaliatory or retributive measures and the excitement very soon subsided, thanks to the tact and judgment of the local Governors. But in the Punjab martial law was proclaimed and was continued for over six weeks under such conditions that they have furnished a foundation for a charge being formulated against the executive and military authorities of indulging in a campaign of sheer 'frightfulness.'

It is but natural that every Government should be jealous to maintain its credit and reputation by promptly contradicting or explaining anything wrongly stated or insinuated to its detriment. No exception need therefore be taken to the Indian Government freely availing itself of this privilege. But not a single assertion made by me in the first series of articles has been disputed by the Government for the reason, which is recognized by the *London Times*, that I had relied entirely

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on materials that were either official or drawn from Anglo-Indian journals. In dealing further with the Punjab affairs I propose to follow the same lines and to discard all private information. In the proceedings of the last sessions of the Legislative Council there is a good deal of material available in the admissions that have been officially made and the Government cannot complain if on certain points their silence is to be construed into consent. Where categorical questions have been put and no answer has been vouchsafed on the ground that it would be detrimental to the public interests, they cannot escape the ordinary presumption that if given it would be unfavourable to them. And the same would apply where the matter is disposed of by an evasive reply. In certain instances the statements of official witnesses before the Inquiry Committee have made up for the reticence of Government, besides supplying a vast amount of information relating to the disturbances in the Punjab. By a fortuitous combination of circumstances the executive find themselves placed in a very favourable position. Lord Hunter had allowed under certain restrictions both the Government and the people to be represented by counsel with the result that both sides were able at Delhi to elicit facts of the utmost importance for arriving at the truth and thus the subject matter of inquiry was thoroughly sifted. But in the Punjab the Congress sub-committee, which is advocating the cause of the people, decided practically to boycott the Inquiry Committee, as the Government refused to allow the political leaders, now undergoing imprisonment, to be present at the Inquiry. The request was reasonable on the face of it and there were several precedents to support it. It is, therefore, to

be regretted the Government was unable to accede to it. It is difficult to understand its attitude or of those at whose instance the extreme step was adopted to allow the enquiry to proceed *ex parte* so far as the people are concerned, for a fine opportunity has been lost for eliciting important points in their favour. At all events, the Government is a gainer thereby, for it is able to put forward in full force its evidence without any risk of its breaking down under a severe cross-examination.

I have no desire to minimise the outrages committed by the people, and I admit that those to whom the guilt can fairly be brought home are deserving of the most condign punishment. I again reiterate that the fostering of passive resistance on to the agitation in respect to the Rowlatt Act was a great blunder. I still hold the view that the very fact that the political leaders of Lahore and Amritsar were not able to control the rowdy element which committed excesses proves that they miscalculated the effect of associating the masses in their political propaganda, and so far they cannot be acquitted of blame. I admit the position of a foreign Government is exceptional and delicate, owing to the failure to understand the people and their temperament, and that it is entitled to greater allowance for blunders that may be committed by it. I recognize that in a moment of panic reason surrenders its sway and passions are aroused and acts are committed which under other circumstances would be scrupulously avoided as outraging the sense of decency and propriety. I would again emphasize the fact that, in forming an estimate of English character and conduct and their capacity to govern a country with tact, justice and humanity, we ought not to overlook the evidence furnished

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by Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi where a situation similar to that of the Punjab was dealt with in a manner entitled to evoke the utmost admiration and respect. Making all these allowances and taking into account these various considerations no fair-minded person can help arriving at the conclusion that the disclosures now being made before the Inquiry Committee do in no way redound to the credit of the English nation and that they are of such a nature that they are calculated to deal a severe blow to the loyalty of the people. In the dark days of the Indian mutiny was issued the proclamation transferring the government of India from the East India Company to the Crown and in it we find the gracious words of the Queen who then reigned over England: 'In the prosperity of the people will be our strength, in their contentment our security and in their gratitude our best reward. And may the God of all Power grant to us and to those in authority under us strength to carry out these our wishes for the good of our people.' Those who are engaged in carrying out these wishes at the present moment hug the belief that strength lies in the use of bombs and machine guns on a defenceless rabble, a somewhat curious method of promoting the prosperity of the people. To ruthlessly terrorise over them with a callous disregard to their feelings is scarcely calculated to make them contented and by inflicting degrading indignities the most sanguine cannot expect to elicit their gratitude. If then the people are neither contented nor grateful where lies the security of British rule in India?

The political situation in India is somewhat ludicrous. A civilized nation is engaged in the self-imposed task of governing a country in respect to which the idea is in a

general way entertained that it is peopled by heathens and savages. A comfortable assurance is cherished that it has firmly established its prestige as the most cultured and humane nation in the world, for has it not inveighed at odd times against the savagery and atrocities of other nations, such as the Turks, the Belgians and the present-day Huns? Has it not shed its blood and almost exhausted its resources in championing the cause of truth and justice and protecting the rights of those who ran the risk of being swallowed up by their powerful and unscrupulous neighbours to whose greed and rapacity there was no limit? Is it not busy at the present moment in devising a scheme for starting the people over whom it is ruling on the path of self-government? For the self-same people to question whether their rulers are bankrupt of public morality, justice and humanity is indeed a bitter irony of fate. And yet this question is either on the lips of every educated Indian or if the terrors of the Defence of India Act prevent a vocal utterance, it is being revolved by him in his mind. And the strictures of the English press will encourage their depreciatory attitude towards those who had the recent handling of Punjab affairs in their hands though they cannot but be impressed with the fairmindedness and justice of the British nation in having no scruples as to condemning its representatives in India for their recent achievements in the art of government. My faith was by no means misplaced.

Some months ago I wrote that the man most to be pitied then was Sir Michael O'Dwyer. To-day I should say the men most to be pitied are Lord Hunter and Mr. Justice Rankin. The President of the Disorders Inquiry Committee when he accepted this position had probably



a hazy notion of the Punjab, and most likely had never heard of Gujranwala, Kasur or even of Amritsar. Recently the *Morning Post* of England, after printing a cable recounting some hill fighting on the North-West Frontier, near Maughi, wrote in an editorial note : 'The operations described above occurred in a mountainous district in the province of Rajputana, to the south-east of Jodhpur.' If the editor of one of the leading journals in England could betray such blissful ignorance, surely it would be excusable on the part of Lord Hunter if he had put down the Punjab as a city or a lake in Central India. As to the matter to be inquired into what could be an easier task ? The Punjab had enjoyed the inestimable blessing of martial law, for so it is looked upon by those who had the privilege of administering it, hence to his highly trained legal mind there could only be certain fixed issues in respect to which a decision was called for. These were specified by the letter of appointment, and besides he had former precedents to guide him. But Lord Hunter could never for a moment have imagined that he would be afflicted by the experience he is now undergoing, that of sitting day after day to hear questions put to Englishmen which impugned their notions of sanity, morality, justice and humanity. And these were put not by individuals hostile to the witnesses but by his colleagues in the Committee over which he was presiding. To a high-minded Englishman nothing could be more galling, and yet his spirit of fairness and impartiality cannot prevent these questions being put, for they naturally arise from facts which are being elicited and in respect to the character of which he prefers at this stage to be silent. Mr. Justice Rankin, though equally judicial-minded, could not restrain



himself and blurted out his estimation of the nature of some of the incidents and episodes that are being deposed to in the question he put to General Dyer, the hero of the Jallianwala Bagh slaughter, whether in the firing on the crowd there 'was not a resort to what is called frightfulness?'

This was not an isolated case of frightfulness, for as the inquiry proceeded fresh instances were forthcoming of acts done and orders passed by British officials which later on made it imperative for an Indemnity Act to be passed. It will no doubt protect certain individuals from personal liability, but does the matter end there? What about the effect of a campaign of irresponsible frightfulness on the people of the Punjab? What about the loss of English character and prestige on which rests the foundation of its rule in India? Those at present at the helm of affairs in this country are in a way on their trial for having permitted the commission of misdeeds, and therefore cannot fairly answer or be expected to answer these questions, apart from the fact that the superior is most unwilling to give away his subordinate, however much he may disapprove of his conduct. Those actually concerned in these misdeeds I take no account of. Their task is over, and though an Indemnity Act has been passed it is with certain reservations which are somewhat inconvenient and risky. In self-defence they must therefore plead that these deeds were done in good faith and in the full assurance that the peculiar circumstances of the occasion called for them. And to emphasize this the assertion is so confidently made that they would do the same thing over again. Whether this is likely to serve the interests of the British Raj, as was pertinently asked by one of the

Commissioners, is evidently a question of secondary importance, as also whether it redounds to the credit of the English nation, totally ignoring the wise dictum that it is righteousness which exalteth a nation. Justice and humanity form the basis of English rule in India, and the day a suspicion is aroused as to the absence of these characteristics this rule will receive its death blow. A moral decadence is found to sap the strength of the rulers and to undermine the high ideal of their statesmanship. Not long ago Lord Morley, philosopher and statesman, in writing to Lord Minto, then Viceroy of India, put the question, 'what are we in India for,' and went on to answer it by the assertion, 'surely in order to implant slowly, prudently, judiciously those ideas of justice, law, humanity which are the foundations of our own civilisation.' The gospel of force has had its day, and those who seek to revive it can at best enjoy a success that will be temporary. Lord Roberts, the apostle of force, has stated that 'however efficient and well equipped the army of India may be, were it indeed absolute perfection and were its numbers considerably more than they are at present, our greatest strength must ever rest in the firm base of a united and contented India.' But we have in India at present General Dyer, the hero of the Jallianwala tragedy, who says, 'the one thing is force.' The *Manchester Guardian* has dubbed him a madman and his forceful acts have been described as 'atrocities.' Mr. Montagu says he was kept in the dark about them and that they are 'profoundly disturbing.'

The *Times* before the full tale of woe was disclosed had commented on the indignation aroused by the action of the executive in reference to the Punjab disturbances. That

indignation now that details are being published has developed into a deep and burning resentment. Even moderate Indian journals are commenting on the 'brutalities' and 'atrocities' that were perpetrated not in one instance, but repeatedly. Just below the editorial note in which these expressions occur is another note dealing with some observations made by Sir Michael Sadler at the meetings he has been addressing on Indian affairs in England. In this note is quoted a remark made by him, the irony of which is obvious. 'Service for India at this moment was', says Sir Michael, 'in a special way a service to the world. India was the testing place of Britain. It was in India that the temper of those who went forth from this country revealed the real power of the institutions under which we live.' It would be interesting to know what he thinks of the temper displayed by certain Englishmen in the Punjab, for in all fairness Englishmen in other parts of India should be excluded and even those in the Punjab not directly concerned. It furnishes a curious commentary on the institutions of England, for it would appear as if a practical illustration was being afforded of the principles, that might is right and that it is a case of the survival of the fittest and strongest. Mr. Montagu rebuked Lord Sydenham for slandering the educated classes by the statement that they were more or less seditious, and here we have Col. Johnson, the martial law administrator in Lahore, stating with reference to the Lahore colleges, which are the nursery of the *intelligencia* of the Punjab that 'there was so much sedition to be found in them that it was a matter of indifference if his treatment of the students made these young men imbibe a bitter hatred towards the British

Government for the rest of their lives, for nothing that he did could make them worse.' Col. O'Brien, deputy commissioner of Gujranwala, when asked about a certain order that it would by reason of its being humiliating create resentment and bitterness, stated 'the bitterness was already existing and his order would not add much to it.' It is pertinent to inquire if the policy embodied herein finds acceptance with the English nation. And again, while Col. Johnson admitted the truth of the suggestion made by Lord Hunter that in a large population there must have been many citizens who were not disposed to disorder and were quite willing to obey orders, therefore the duty devolved on him not to issue orders 'calculated to permanently alienate the people or put them out of sympathy with the administration, but he added, 'we were making examples of people who were doing wrong.' Seemingly it mattered little to him if the whole country became disaffected so long as the desire to retaliate for the wrong done by a few was gratified even at the expense of the innocent suffering along with the guilty. Major Darberry, the officer in charge of the aeroplane which fired on the people at Gujranwala and adjacent villages, admitted that innocent people were made to suffer with the guilty as he 'had no time to make any discrimination, but looked to the moral effect,' and the same it may be presumed was his object in firing on crowds that were running away or on groups of persons who may have been innocent sight-seers. It would be interesting to know if he was rightly interpreting the sentiments of the nation whom he was representing in India. And we find General Dyer stating that he was 'doing a jolly lot of good' by firing on a crowd of persons



who it is not alleged were committing a breach of the peace without asking them to disperse and who were running away, for his object was 'to strike terror not only on the immediate crowd but all through the Punjab.' General Dyer was not singular in views he expressed, for there were others who also preached and practised the gospel of terrorism. Mr. Marsden, sub-divisional officer at Kasur, admitted that school boys against whom no complaint had been made were flogged as a 'preventive measure' and to 'strike terror,' and that the same was the object of erecting a scaffold at the Kasur railway station. This is all very well, but the point which calls for consideration is whether a method of Government on these lines is calculated to cement a good feeling between the rulers and the ruled and whether it will stimulate the loyalty of the people of India to the English nation? I had faith in the English nation and entertained no doubt as to the response which would be given, for even Englishmen in India though officials and though serving in the Punjab are unwilling to signify their approval of this incident, in spite of the fact that it had received the sanction of their late chief, Sir Michael O'Dwyer. Mr. Kitchin, the commissioner of the division in which Amritsar is situated, when asked by one of the members of the Committee whether he approved of the Jallianwala affair, frankly replied he would rather not answer the question. And Mr. Irving, when questioned if the firing on the crowd without asking it to disperse was to strike terror, did not repudiate this, but stated he could not say what was in General Dyer's mind when he ordered the soldier's to fire, as if he was most anxious to dissociate himself from the military hero. The strain put on the

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loyalty of the people of India was great, but I feel convinced that English statesmanship will rise equal to the occasion and by an emphatic condemnation of the policy of frightfulness, which for a time reigned rampant in the Punjab, will restore their confidence in British justice and humanity.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE RETICENCE OF A STRENUOUS GOVERNMENT.

The disclosures in connection with the Jallianwala massacre, while they have shocked the English conscience, have at the same time aroused a natural curiosity how an incident of this kind could have for so many months been successfully suppressed. Mr. Montagu has repudiated any knowledge except the bare outlines, from which it follows that even the Viceroy had not been apprized, at least officially, of the details. Sir Michael O'Dwyer is in the country and can solve the mystery, for there were other episodes, pregnant with serious consequences, over which a veil has equally been thrown. Whether the extraordinary reticence on the part of a strenuous Government was due to a pure accident will be evident from a brief survey of certain material that is now available. We have seen that the agitation with reference to the Rowlatt Act led to a series of disorders in various parts of India. Ahmedabad may be put out of this category as local causes were at work there. Full publicity was given by the Governments of Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi to the measures adopted to put down the disorders, nor was any attempt made to stifle or distort them. No embargo was laid on the movements of the people inside or outside the infected area. The military helped the civil authorities in quelling the riots and a few lives were lost in each instance, but there the matter ended. There was no imposition of martial law, no prosecution was started

against the leaders of public opinion and the whole affair subsided after the prominent inhabitants were seriously remonstrated with and were warned that severe action would be taken unless the fooleries being committed by an irresponsible mob were stopped.

But the Punjab, the most loyal of provinces, was at a moment's notice proclaimed to be in open rebellion, and martial law was imposed. It now appears from the official evidence given before the Disorders Inquiry Committee that the civil authorities, prior to the Governor-General in Council sanctioning the application of martial law, had quietly surrendered a portion of the Punjab to the military, who engaged in the task of administration according to their sweet will, of which we have seen and shall see some fine samples. So far as the outside public was concerned the only information vouchsafed by a benign Government was that Lahore, Amritsar and some adjacent cities were in open rebellion and that all the resources of civilization were being requisitioned to quell the outbreak. It would be natural to presume that a martial race like the Punjabees must have played considerable havoc on those they were fighting against, but the total number of casualties they were responsible for was seven Europeans killed and one European lady severely assaulted. If the C. I. D., instead of fooling about to entangle innocent people for imaginary crimes, had tried to spot the individuals who committed the outrage on this lady they would have won the eternal gratitude of the people of the Punjab. But stay, I am forgetting an Englishman was wounded in Lahore who should be added to the list of casualties. It was stated by the *Civil and Military Gazette* that he had received a knock on the head which

had to be bandaged, and was taken to a hotel where he was an object of interest to European visitors. This he certainly deserved to be, for he was in the thick of the fight in Anarkali Bazar and had not been molested by the rioters, but, says the same journal, he had been struck by a policeman by mistake. The wonder is not that this policeman had his wits wool gathering, but that in a frenzy of panic the officials generally did not run amok striking their heads against each other. 'Anyhow, full and elaborate details of the foul deeds committed by the rebels were published by means of official communiques and by the Anglo-Indian press ; but what about the action of the officials, civil and military, in suppressing the so-called rebellion ? 'Let us first get an Indemnity Act passed,' seems to have been the idea with which they were obsessed, 'and then you will hear some details, at least so far as you are able to extract them from us.' But evidently they had not calculated on such a contingency as a commission being appointed to investigate their valorous deeds and the reasons which prompted their committal, and they would have scouted the idea if any one had suggested it, that they, the mighty rulers of the land, might be heckled and badgered and reduced to a state of utter imbecility by Indians sitting as commissioners and prying into the reasons why a particular thing was done or a belief was entertained, as if in those memorable days there was any necessity for the existence of a reason for doing anything or believing in anything. Col. O'Brien, deputy commissioner of Gujranwala, having stated that the unrest was due to 'some outside organisation' and being unable to give any reason at last admitted 'it is only my assumption' adding pathetically, 'I never expected to be cross-examined.'

For the policy of secrecy that was adopted from the outset, Sir Michael O'Dwyer is responsible. On the 10th April 1919 there was a disturbance in Amritsar in the course of which some dastardly outrages were committed by city ruffians. The rioters were dispersed and writes the *Civil and Military Gazette*:—‘In the evening news was received that order had been restored.’ That same evening a so-called riot took place in Lahore. It is stated in an official communique ‘that a mob of city riff-raffs and students were proceeding from the city to the Mall and on its refusal to abandon its progress was dispersed under the orders of the magistrate by musket fire.’ As a matter of fact it was discovered afterwards that five rounds of ball cartridges were issued to the police by mistake. Anyhow it is admitted no violence of any kind was used by the mob before or after that. The *Civil and Military Gazette* said: ‘The effect of the fire and the appearance of the cavalry was to finally disperse the rioters, and by 8 p. m. the city was quiet. *After that no further disturbance occurred.*’ And yet the very next morning, nothing objectionable having taken place during the night at Lahore, Amritsar or anywhere else in the Punjab, Sir Michael O'Dwyer issued the following order: ‘Whereas there are reasonable grounds for believing that the publishers are about to publish in their newspapers accounts of or with reference to the disturbances which have taken place in Lahore and Amritsar and whereas the publication of such accounts is likely to be prejudicial to the public safety, therefore the local Government prohibits the publication of such accounts or of any criticism unless these have been submitted for precensorship to the press adviser to Government.’ Martial law



was declared a few days later and one of the orders passed by the military commander at Lahore was to the effect : 'By virtue of the powers vested in me I have prohibited the issue of third or intermediate class tickets at all railway stations in the Lahore civil command, except only in the case of servants travelling with their European masters or others in the employ of the Government.' To prevent people from taking the train from adjacent stations the prohibition was extended to these by the General Officer Commanding. Even first and second class Indian passengers could not travel without a permit and this was rarely granted. Rai Bahadur Gopal Das Bhandari, an official witness before the Committee, stated he took no interest in politics and as there was danger to his house being burnt he had taken his family from Amritsar to Lahore. A permit to return was refused him till he appealed to Col. Bayley, the Lieutenant-Governor's private secretary. At Amritsar, Mr. Irvine, the deputy commissioner, stated: 'No one was allowed to travel without a permit' and he passed on the responsibility for this to the military authorities. At Gujranwala, Layallpur and Wazirabad Major C. J. W. Smith reigned as martial law administrator and he admits the 'educated classes were not permitted to travel in his area, in order to prevent infection'—not of plague or cholera, but of politics, they being 'suspicious characters.' In Kasur not only were the people prohibited from leaving the town but those who had left were ordered to return. Some who failed to do so, most likely because they never heard of the order, had their houses broken into, their clothes burnt and their earthenware broken, all this by way of 'reprisal', says the valliant Commander, Capt. Doveton. The net result of

this was that neither through the press nor through private individuals was it possible to get any news as to what was transpiring in the area credited with being infected, for a strict censorship was exercised on correspondence passing through the post. Both the English dailies of Lahore had to suspend their issue and one of them, the *Punjabee*, has ceased to exist. With the Indian press suppressed and every device adopted to prevent news from leaking out, it was all the more incumbent on the Government, by means of official communiques, as also for the English press, to keep the public apprised of the progress of events. How far this duty was discharged is evident from the fact that a disclosure is now being made by official witnesses of incidents and episodes which have aroused the indignation of the world and which constituted one of the reasons why a certain proportion of the Indian population refused to take part in the peace celebrations.

Let us start first with Amritsar. Graphic details were given of the outbreak there and of the excesses committed by the mob, as also of the measures adopted to put down the riot and for the protection of the Europeans. But what about the reprisals on the inhabitants by which both the innocent and the guilty were made to suffer and in the course of which cruelty was reduced to a fine art? What about the humiliating indignities to which they were subjected? What about the tragedy of the Jallianwala Bagh? What about the floggings which were administered at random? All this was absolutely suppressed. Rumours were afloat that some fearful things had occurred, but beyond that the outside world knew nothing. One Gobardhan Das who had the temerity to make some dis-

closures, and as was to be expected had on the basis of rumours made some incorrect statements, was promptly arrested, tried by the Defence of India Act and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. It is not denied that terrorism of a flagrant nature was employed; it would have been futile to do so in the face of the facts that are being elicited by the Hunter Committee. General Dyer admits he had revolved in his mind the doing of something that would strike the imagination of the whole of the Punjab, but beyond it was the further idea so to cow down the people that they would have neither the heart nor the energy left to make any disclosures of the sufferings and the indignities to which they had been subjected. Col. O'Brien before he started in the discharge of his amiable duties asked the Chief Secretary to the Government to 'see that his actions were legalised if done in good faith'. Mr. Thompson replied 'it would be all right if he used common sense'. We shall see how that was used. And while this terrorism was in progress any kind of publicity was to be strenuously prevented. And the order of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, practically suppressing the Indian press, served this purpose. British officials are now being charged with 'brutalities' and 'atrocities', and with conduct that is called 'infamous'. But for this order and the policy of reticence adopted by the Government and the Anglo-Indian press such charges would never have been heard of, for English opinion would at once have nipped in the bud the continuance of a course of conduct which drew from Mr. Justice Rankin the remark that it was suggestive of 'frightfulness'.

This was said with special reference to the Jallianwala incident as regards which Mr. Andrews, so well-known for

the services he has rendered to the Empire, states after a visit to Amritsar, that 'the massacre of Glencoe in English history is no greater blot on the fair fame of my country than the massacre at Amritsar. I am not speaking from idle rumour. I have gone into every single detail with all the care and thoroughness that a personal investigation could command and it remains to me an unspeakable disgrace—indefensible, unpardonable, inexcusable.' The details will be dealt with later on. At present the point most relevant is the length to which the reticence of a strenuous Government was carried in this instance. An official communique, dated 14th April, 1917, states 'that at Amritsar all meetings were prohibited, but in spite of this prohibition one was announced to take place in the afternoon. About 6,000 people attended. This meeting, held in defiance of the law, was dispersed by a small force of Indian troops consisting of detachments of the 29th Gurkas, the 54 Sikhs and the 59th Sind Rifles. The *casualties were heavy*, but quiet has since prevailed in the city and it is expected that shops will open on the 15th.' How very illuminating this account is! If in dispersing a crowd the death had been caused of a dozen persons it may well have been described by the expression 'the casualties were heavy' but it conveyed to no one the idea that from four to five hundred persons had been done to death, as is now officially admitted, though certain Indian leaders from outside, who are advocating the cause of the people, have on the strength of inquiries made by them personally traced out no less than 530 persons who were killed and as to the wounded they were about 1500 in number. But the authorities had no precise knowledge of the casualties as they were absolutely

indifferent about the matter, and it was months later, when there was an outcry by the public for information, that they began to institute inquiries. Mr. Thompson, Chief Secretary to the Punjab Government, stated on the 13th September at a meeting of the Imperial Legislative Council that the total number of casualties amounted to 291, though he admitted that probably 'we shall never know the exact number of persons who met their death in that garden.' But Mr. Burton, deputy commissioner of Amritsar, stated before the Hunter Committee a couple of months later that so far 415 deaths had been traced out. As persons from long distances usually attend the Baisakhi fair which was being held on the day this incident occurred, it is obvious how difficult it is to make out a complete list of the killed and wounded and this Mr. Burton admitted. The *Civil and Military Gazette* at first stated that there were *heavy casualties* among the mob, 'several hundreds being killed and injured.' This was in a later issue toned down to the assertion that 'the troops fired causing *severe casualties*.' And it is a very significant fact that in the pamphlet published by it, entitled, 'Punjab Disturbances—compiled from the *Civil and Military Gazette*' its own versions of the Jallianwala Bagh incident are entirely eliminated. The Associated Press which is under a contract to supply news relating to the whole of India was silent on the subject of the casualties, though it had a special agent at Lahore. Perhaps the pre-censorship of Sir Michael O'Dwyer was responsible for this. Though in the heat of the moment he had signified by wire his approval to General Dyer of the latter's action, possibly when fully apprised of the details he arrived at the conclusion that the less is known about it to the public the better.



Martial law has been described as the negation of all law. It vests the military commander with full and absolute discretion to do anything or order anything he likes, and it is always understood that he should act with ordinary common sense. But martial law in the Punjab was distinguished by two special features. Certain things were done with the express purpose that they would serve as object lessons, and the doer glories in the deeds and says he would repeat them over again. But the object in view was defeated by these achievements being either kept a profound secret or by their significance being greatly minimised. This is a matter in respect to which Sir Michael O'Dwyer will perhaps vouchsafe some explanation to an inquisitive world. For it is impossible to understand the attempt made to suppress the Jallianwalla incident. It was certainly not due to General Dyer, for he frankly admits having done certain acts and gives us the reason why he did them. He wanted to do something 'strong' and he wanted to do this so that 'from a military point of view it would make a wide impression throughout the Punjab.' Hence the Jallianwalla slaughter. But no sooner the deed is done the object is defeated by every effort being put forward to suppress it as if there was no General Dyer and no massacre. And the same is the fate of what is known as the crawling incident, the details of which merit separate treatment. This again General Dyer admits had its birth after a good deal of 'searching' of his mind. Why then should it have been treated as an abortion instead of a happy event for the delectation of the world? But as a matter of fact it was months after the event that this product of his mind was introduced to the world with many

apologies. The 'public lashings' were administered by him to 'make a good impression.' Why the moral depravity of this world should not have benefited by this good impression is a problem which must be exercising his active and prolific mind? But a perverse Government was ready to fly at a person's throat if even a suggestion was made that flogging was resorted to by the martial law authorities, whereas it now turns out that all over the infected area it was inflicted indiscriminately.

As regards Lahore we shall see later on that in spite of its being the headquarters of Government, from which fact it was natural to suppose a certain amount of restraint would be exercised, there was on the part of the martial law authorities a deliberate and total disregard of the lives and the property of Indians and of their ordinary rights as free citizens. Publicity was given to the martial law orders by their publication in the *Civil and Military Gazette*, but how these orders had been worked the outside world knew nothing till months later, and the people in the Punjab knew of it last of all. So rigorously was censorship being applied that any one city in the infected area did not know what was transpiring in its neighbourhood. For acts which on the face of it are most extraordinary the excuse casually put forward is that they were intended to have a moral effect. If so, then why keep dark these various achievements as if they were dark deeds that could not bear the light of day? Flogging as a punishment, says Col. Johnson, the martial law administrator at Lahore, has four virtues attached to it. It is 'essential' it is 'deterrent' it is conducive to 'health' and 'its value is great.' Then why not have given publicity to each case as it occurred, so that the moral effect

may not be lost to the world? Why should the incident now admitted by him have been kept a secret that a priest and some others belonging to a marriage party were arrested and flogged because they were more than ten in number? What a fine advertisement this would have been of British justice and humanity? Why was Capt. Doveton, the military commander at Kasur, not allowed to tickle the fancy of a frivolous world by the announcement that he was following in the footsteps of his predecessor, King Solomon, and to quote as a sample of his wisdom that he had ordered three of the biggest boys in a school to be sent over to him to be whipped, not because they had done anything wrong, but as an example to the rest of the boys, that he had ordered persons committing a breach of the Railway Act to go to a goods shed and load and unload bales and do other work, that he had made a large number of persons rub the ground with their forehead and thought 'there was nothing humiliating about it' or 'that it was an infliction,' and that he believed he was entitled to vary the monotony of his work with a little entertainment and so he made quite a number of 'middle aged men skip 20 times without a break.' Whether he showed them how to do it is not recorded, but perhaps he did. And why should Col. O'Brien, deputy commissioner of Gujranwala, have been deprived of the glory due to him for teaching Indians the elements of civility by ordering them, at the risk of being flogged, to alight from wheeled conveyances, and to close their umbrellas when passing a European officer? There seems to have been a keen competition in the memorable days of martial law between those administering it as to who could invent the largest number of fancy offences and fancy punish-

ments. But why need we labour the point any further? What we are concerned with at present is the fact that for so many months a veil has been thrown over these brilliant achievements by an over-strenuous and at the same time over-sensitive Government. But if the most 'brilliant administrator' the Punjab has been blessed with had had his way, the present exposure would never have taken place; and now that it has taken place all that the Anglo-Indian journals can say about the Jallianwala affair is fairly represented by the comments of the *Englishman*: 'The kindest, surest, most reasonable action as regards the Punjab is to forget. Nothing will be gained by going persistently into a matter that exhibits neither side at its best.' This *neither side at its best* is certainly rich! The *Pioneer* without admitting that the authorities were guilty of any dereliction of duty, pleads that the amnesty allowed to political offenders should be extended to the authorities; so keen is it to vindicate British honour and justice. These are seemingly articles which in the present degenerate days possess no value. The European Association, apprehensive of the verdict of the commissioners, cries frantically enough 'Let the Hunter Commission be dissolved.' Truly from every point of view a new lustre has been shed by Punjab officials on British rule in India.

## CHAPTER XII.

### IS POLITICAL AGITATION A CRIME ?

India has now arrived at a stage wherein it has a chance of working out its own salvation, for the foundation has been laid for the acquirement in course of time of complete self-government. How has this stage been reached ? If the answer be given by Indians affording evidence of having qualified themselves for undertaking the new responsibility, it will fall short of the truth. For it has been their bitter experience that however qualified they have been to discharge certain functions or to fill certain positions and in spite of profuse promises solemnly made that there was no limit to their ambitions, their achievements in this direction have not been very conspicuous. Whatever success can be placed to their credit has been due to their persistent agitation in season and out of season and in the face of calumny and official displeasure. The immediate cause of the grant of certain privileges or the removal of certain disabilities has always been of agitation. Be it said to the credit of the English nation that though they have been at times unsympathetic and somewhat irresponsive they have readily recognized that agitation within certain bounds was legitimate and preferable by far to the in-brooding of grievances to which no outward expression was given. In the Reforms Report, for which Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford are jointly responsible, the genesis and progress of political agitation in India are carefully, and



sympathetically traced, and approval is accorded to its culmination in the union for political purposes of the two main communities, Hindu and Mahomedan. And any remaining doubts are dispersed by the gracious words in the King Emperor's Proclamation—'I have watched with understanding and sympathy the growing desire of my Indian people for representative institutions. Starting from small beginnings this ambition has steadily strengthened its hold upon the intelligence of the country. It has pursued its course along constitutional channels with sincerity and courage. It has survived the discredit which at times and in places lawless men sought to cast upon it by acts of violence committed under the name of patriotism.'

The English constitution owes its origin to the awakening of the people to political consciousness and to their persistent agitation that the methods of government should be adapted to the necessities of an age of progress. And Indians have done no more than copy perhaps a little too slavishly English political methods. Their minds and ideas have expanded by western education and western culture ; they have aspired to western institutions and are striving to obtain them by the orthodox western methods of political agitation. By the side of intellectual progress we find accentuated the desire for the commercial development of the country, and in other respects there is evidence of a new national life. That on the whole English statesmen are in sympathy with this new awakening it would be ungenerous on our part to deny. Why then, it will be asked, is the question put, 'Is political agitation a crime'? It is because there is indubitable evidence that very recently in the Punjab political agitation has been treated as if it were a crime and political

agitators have been dealt with as worse than ordinary criminals. The indulgence in a campaign of frightfulness may be put down to the frenzy produced by unreasoning panic, but the attempt to stifle political life was as deliberate as it has far-reaching consequences. If successful it will strangle the progress of a nation, but if this object is not achieved it will recoil on those responsible for initiating a policy so foreign to the instincts of the British nation, and will expose them to the bitter hatred of the people sought to be victimised. It is therefore necessary to deal with this question in some detail and I trust I shall do so fairly and dispassionately.

What are the broad facts? There were some disturbances in the Punjab which in some places were unfortunately attended by deplorable outrages. There were similar disorders in other parts of India though of not so serious a nature. In the Punjab alone was martial law proclaimed. It dealt with two classes of offenders. There were those who were actually engaged in the perpetration of outrages and breaches of the law ranging from the alleged waging of war against the all-powerful British Government by means of bamboo sticks to riding a high horse without dismounting or not lowering an umbrella in the presence of a white face or semi-white face or not tendering it with body double bent a respectful obeisance. The punishments ranged from death to being flogged on the open road or being white-washed with lime and then let loose; to reciting the formula 'we repent, we repent' till such time as Mr. Bosworth Smith's proposed house of repentance, with of course the requisite stool, was ready for occupation or writing an autobiography on the ground with the nose; to inditing a poem on the trying

magistrate or in the case of fat and middle aged persons to skipping twenty times, so as to afford free entertainment to a jaded official. Where so many opprobrious epithets are being freely used it may perhaps be excusable to remark that the behaviour of some of the officials in the Punjab was more like that of the inmates of Bedlam. A country declared to be in open rebellion, tragic events of sorts being enacted in various parts, and here we have the mighty rulers of the land indulging in the most extraordinary antics and more especially in their treatment of men they stigmatized as political agitators.

These were the other class of offenders. There was no overt act of violence brought home to them. Amritsar was the scene of the worst outrage and we have Mr. Irvine, the deputy commissioner, stating before the Hunter Committee that 'he did not think that any of the leaders intended things to end in violence. As regards the actual rioters they consisted of the lower orders of the city and included Kashmeri Mahomedans, Hindus, Khattris, etc. They were led by hooligans. Whatever the leaders may have thought these hooligans had quite different intentions. The dislike of the mob was shown on persons and property belonging to Europeans. No hostility was evidenced towards Government servants as such and not even the police were molested.' As to Lahore, a Government communique stated that it was the city riff-raffs who were concerned in the alleged riots there, and it is pleaded on their behalf that they did no more than form an orderly procession to interview the Lieutenant-Governor. And in fact in the other centres of disorder, in spite of the most strenuous exertions of the Criminal Investigation

Department, no case could be made out against the educated classes of being concerned in any acts of violence.

What then were the political agitators accused of? Of no less a crime than that of waging war, of abetment in waging war and of a conspiracy to wage war. In the indictment against Mr. Harkishanlal and other leaders of public opinion in Lahore it was recited that they in conjunction with one 'Gandhi' had conspired to wage war etc., the said Gandhi being about the same time eulogised by the Secretary of State for India as a man of unblemished character and of lofty ideals. If there is one man in the whole of India who has rightly earned the title of a man of peace and to whom violence of any kind is utterly abhorrent it is Mr. Gandhi. It only shows the state of imbecility the authorities in the Punjab were reduced to, to find them attributing to such a man the being engaged in a conspiracy to subvert the Government. But what was the actual process by which this war was being waged? Arms the people had none. At one time it was believed that bundles of sticks had been imported in Amritsar in anticipation of being needed in an impending fight, but we have it in evidence that a trader had sent for them in the ordinary course of business and that when the disturbance took place delivery had not been taken of them. In Lahore it is said the mob was armed with brickbats—may be, but, these are curious weapons for meeting an onslaught of machine guns and bombs. Nowhere in the Punjab were any persons found to be in possession of unlicensed fire-arms or of any explosive or other deleterious substance. But it is said the waging of war was not so much a physical as an intellectual process and the evidence of it was to be found in the use of strong

language while protesting against the passing of the Rowl tt Act or other measures of Government, or to put it in general terms in the free exercise of the right of political agitation.

But political agitation could not be openly discountenanced, as all the world over it is looked upon as a desirable means towards a desirable end, and the expedient was therefore adopted of attaching a criminal significance to certain overt acts and stigmatizing them as open rebellion. It served the double purpose of punishing the political agitator and of releasing the Government from a tight corner, that of justifying the proclamation of martial law. The various incidents during this eventful period went no further than to prove that a mob had got out of hand and had in some places committed excesses which putting the worst construction on them could not be brought within the category of acts of open rebellion. A simple solution was to be found in assuming the existence of open rebellion and then any kind of criminality could be attributed to acts which ordinarily would be hardly worth any notice. A mob goes to interview the Lieutenant-Governor and is fired upon and driven back, though it had committed no violence. Certain individuals were tried and sentenced to transportation for life. Why? Because it was held that this occurrence was 'plainly part and parcel of the rebellion which had already broken out.' In the affair at Lahori gate missiles were said to have been thrown, but fortunately no one was hit. For proving such bad shots a few, who were favoured by the testimonials of the police, were prosecuted and sentenced to transportation on the finding of the judicial luminaries who tried them that they had committed the offence of



waging war and 'this needs no demonstration.' In the Hira Mandi affair there was a similar charge and a similar punishment and in the judgment the reason given is that 'judicial notice is taken of the fact that there was already a state of rebellion in existence.' In the Badshahi mosque case a prying C. I. D. officer was beaten and his *pagri* was burnt. Nine men were sentenced to transportation for life. Why? Because it was in all seriousness held that the laying hands on his sacred person was tantamount to waging war. The leaders of public opinion were sentenced wholesale to transportation under the firm belief that thereby political agitation in the Punjab would be wiped out for good. It need hardly be said all the victims of this tomfoolery have been discharged by the clemency of the King. And so far from giving up political agitation they marched straight from the jail to the National Congress or the All-India Muslim League meeting at Amritsar which were then in session, and horror of horrors were treated there as heroes. Mr. Duni Chand, a member of the municipal committee Lahore, was one of those who had to march hand-cuffed along the streets to and from the courts and of course had the usual sentence of transportation for life and forfeiture of property passed against him. On his release and on his first re-appearance in the committee, which was presided over by a European official president, he had to face a resolution 'congratulating him on his release and welcoming him back as one of the most useful and upright members of the committee,' although on being set free he had renewed his alleged mischievous activity. He had a few minutes before opposed an amendment by which a European member desired to add the name of Lord

Chelmsford to that of Mr. Montagu and Lord Sinha to whom a vote of thanks was being proposed for their services in connection with the passing of the Reforms Act.

An impartial writer of the history of the Punjab disturbances and the martial law period which followed it will not fail to arrive at the conclusion that a dead set was made by the Government against the educated classes and specially against the legal practitioners, and this was solely because of their predilection for political agitation. The official evidence marshalled before the Hunter Committee has brought out in broad relief the fact that far from being the actual perpetrators of acts of violence they all over the affected area were most forward in helping the authorities to restore order, and this in spite of the contumely and indignity with which they were treated, including those who had rendered the most signal service to the Crown for which they had been duly rewarded. But nevertheless all lawyers were suspects. Mr. Tomkins, the deputy inspector-general of police, admitted that he had issued instructions under martial law that 'pleaders should be regarded as suspicious characters,' the reason being that he believed 'some pleaders were instrumental in spreading disaffection'. Being pressed to state the evidence on which he had arrived at this conclusion all he could say was that 'somehow he had received that impression.' Col. Frank Johnson, the martial law administrator in Lahore, can boast of four years' residence in India, during which period he probably never came into contact with a single educated man, yet he entertained certain very precise ideas about them. The extremists he considered highly educated people, hence lawyers and

highly educated people, were all extremists and it wrung his heart to have to state that the 'majority of lawyers were seditionists.' For arriving at this conclusion he gave what he no doubt considered a very convincing reason that 'they held meetings and preached sedition.' As to when and where they had done this his mind presented a total blank, and he very much resented the fact that his word was not accepted and that he was subjected to a cross-examination. Col. MacRae, another martial law administrator, had also certain fixed ideas about agitators, and his examination by Sir Chimanlal Setalvad will bear being quoted. With reference to the martial law notices which he had ordered to be posted at the house of 'well-known agitators', he was asked what was meant by the term 'agitators' and replied that the meaning of the word was as shown in the English dictionary.

Sir Chimanlal : Whom do you mean ?

Witness. I think it is good English.

Sir Chimanlal : I never suggested it is bad English.

Witness : I don't want to answer it otherwise then. I have said, it is quite clear.

Sir Chimanlal : 'Agitators' may mean any class of persons.

Lord Hunter to the witness : Have you no idea in your own mind as to what you mean by 'agitator'?

Witness : A man who agitates against Government.

Sir Chimanlal : What do you mean by a man who agitates against Government ?

Witness : Who by expression or otherwise speaks against Government measures.

Sir Chimanlal : You ordered these notices should be

posted on houses of well-known agitators. Did you explain what was meant by 'agitators'?

Witness : No I did not.

Sir Chimanlal : What do you mean by 'malcontents'?

Witness : One who is discontented with any Government measure.

Sir Chimanlal : Were the houses of all lawyers selected ?

Witness : I don't know, I did not see how the police carried out the order.

Sir Chimanlal : As a deterrent against the defacing of these notices you warned that action would be taken against the property of persons on whose houses these notices were posted. Was that warning in writing or oral ?

Witness : What does it matter ?

Sir Chimanlal : Surely, Colonel this is not the way to answer. This is not the attitude to be adopted towards this Committee or any member of it.

General Beynon, the General officer commanding the 15th Indian Division, when questioned with reference to the prohibition of legal practitioners from entering the martial law area stated that 'from the military point of view he considered the presence of those excellent gentlemen not necessary'. When asked whether he was not treating Lahore as an enemy country and the reasons for the prohibition his mind could not travel beyond the fact that he considered their presence was not necessary.

With the existence of such feelings against the educated classes in general and legal practitioners in particular, it may well be surmised what must have been the treatment accorded to those who came especially under the

notice of the authorities. All over the martial law area pleaders without regard to age or antecedents were enrolled as special constables. Mr. Irvine, the deputy commissioner of Amritsar, when asked whether this was not because of the desire to punish local agitators, frankly replied: 'The idea did not originate with me. I can't speak as to the motives of the General'. Those who were known to have taken a part in the agitation relating to the Rowlatt Act were arrested and handcuffed and marched to jail and subjected to the most ingenious and unheard of indignities. Amongst the numerous questions put by Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya in the Imperial Legislative Council was one relating to Gujranwala. Mr. Thompson in reply practically admitted the correctness of the facts stated therein. It was to the effect: 'The deputy commissioner of Gujranwala, with a strong body of police and European soldiers and with an armoured car marched to the house of L. Mela Ram, B.A., LL. B., pleader, and arrested and hand-cuffed him and took him away without allowing him to dress and speak to his family. The party then arrested Mr. Labh Singh, M. A., (Cantab), bar-at-law, and chained him with L. Mela Ram. They proceeded to the house of 20 other respectable persons, arrested and handcuffed them and chained them all together. The persons arrested and chained together were marched to the city, two and two, headed by a Hindu and a Mahomedan, to ridicule Hindu-Moslem unity as was stated at that time by Col. O'Brien. Two municipal commissioners walked in front of the procession, and pointing to the aeroplanes hovering overhead kept on shouting to Indians to make way on pain of being wounded or shot down. After being paraded in the streets



the prisoners were taken to the station, put in an open coal truck guarded by European soldiers with fixed bayonets, with guns directed towards the prisoners. The prisoners were not allowed to leave their places even for the purpose of attending the calls of nature. On reaching Lahore railway station they were kept in a latrine for ten hours and then removed to the jail.'

From the official evidence adduced before the Hunter Commission it is clear that there were numerous cases of respectable persons being arrested, handcuffed and taken to jail where they were kept for a long or short period and then discharged in the absence of any evidence that could convict them. Dr. Manohar Lal, a barrister and ex-Minto Professor of Political Economy, was arrested, being a trustee of the *Tribune*. After being subjected to various indignities and for a time kept in solitary confinement, he was eventually discharged without being brought to trial. Maulvi Ghulam Mohi-uddin, pleader of Kasur, who last year had been publicly rewarded for his services in connection with the war, and Maulvi Abdul Quader, a senior pleader of Kasur, were arrested and kept confined in a jail for some weeks in an improvised lock-up and then released without any charge having been framed. Mr. Irvine stated in his evidence that 'he hesitated to fire on the mob at Amritsar as he found in the crowd two Indian gentlemen who were persuading the crowd to go away. One of these was Mr. Pradayal Singh, a practitioner in his court. He had tried to restrain the mob at great personal risk. He was arrested on the 23rd May, kept in jail for a month and a half and was eventually brought to Lahore and put up for trial. Witness had given evidence in that case, drawing attention to his action in

persuading the crowd to go away and he was acquitted. People in Amritsar laughed at Mr. Singh for his pains and for the reward he had got.'

The lamentable error of judgment displayed by those who had undertaken to advocate the cause of the people before the Disorders Inquiry Committee is much to be deplored in allowing the inquiry to proceed *ex parte* and thus forfeiting the chance of leading evidence which would have thrown considerable light on the events of the martial law period. One of the points in respect to which a vast amount of material was available was the official attitude towards the so-called political agitators and the treatment accorded to them with the view of stamping out political life in the Punjab. But even the evidence as it stands is sufficient to bring this significant fact out in broad relief. How are we to account for this peculiar attitude of the rulers of the Punjab? Were they perchance interpreting the views of the English nation? The idea on the face of it is preposterous. Were they acting in pursuance of a common policy which was to be adopted in all India? This is contradicted by the fact that in Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi a line of conduct was pursued by those responsible for governing the country which instead of seeking to stamp out the leaders of public opinion sought their cordial co-operation and support. Why then was this spirit of hostility so pronounced in the Punjab? There should be no difficulty in arriving at a solution of the problem. Sir Michael O'Dwyer was a strenuous governor and like all strong men he could not brook any opposition to his will or to his settled opinions. He has frankly stated that autocracy is the only form of Government which is suited for the India

of to-day. The educated classes were constantly rubbing him up the wrong way with their numerous pretensions. He fell foul of them in the Imperial Council only to find the next day that retraction or resignation was the only alternative left open to him. He retracted, but with a bad grace, for in safer quarters he repeated his charges. And when the catastrophe came in the shape of the Punjab disorders he threw all restraint to the winds and fulminated against the educated classes in language which for the vituperation he indulged in exhausted the English vocabulary. By six years of close contact with him his lieutenants in the province imbibed from him his political ideas and all the more readily as his was a strong personality. And thus it happens that a line of conduct was pursued which has aroused the indignation not only of the Punjab but of the whole of the intelligent population of India. The sequel is somewhat curious, for a new life born of intense suffering has been infused in the Punjab which no repression is likely ever to extinguish.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### METHOD IN MADNESS.

England rules over India and no sane person has any desire to subvert this rule or indeed to weaken the prestige of England. The desire for self-government is most laudable and is a goal we are bound to reach some day. But to say that we are ready to-day for complete self-government is to indulge in a wild dream which is calculated to imperil the future welfare of the country. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that in the interests of India its connection with England must be maintained and that every patriotic Indian should shape his conduct accordingly. But at the same time a corresponding duty devolves upon England, and that is to rule its subjects with equity, justice and humanity. English statesmen recognise this obligation as they realise the serious consequences which would follow any repudiation or slackening of this principle. Mr. Bernard Houghton, an ex-member of the civil service, is faithfully depicting the consensus of public opinion when he asks with reference to the disclosures made before the Hunter Commission: 'Has not a Government which can only keep the peace by such atrocities abrogated all claim, to be considered a civilised Government? If we can only preserve our rule by such means the sooner we can clear out of India bag and baggage, the better'. The *New Witness* is equally emphatic when it says: 'If we can only govern India by means of periodic massacres we must clear out.' The

manner in which India is being governed is therefore a matter of vital importance and it is doing a dis-service to England to hide or to minimise any action which is calculated to imperil the existing relations between the two countries.

While the political atmosphere was comparatively calm in the spring of 1919 there was a sudden explosion of disorder in various parts of India due to causes which were more or less common. It was natural that stringent measures should be adopted to put this down. Lord Ronaldshay, Sir George Lloyd and Mr. Barron restored order and peace in a few days within the areas for which each was responsible, but in the province which had been acclaimed as the most loyal an orgy of frightfulness was indulged in. It is said rebellion was rampant and the imposition of martial law saved the situation. Lord Hunter's Committee has been entrusted with the task of inquiring into this and other cognate matters, and we need not anticipate its verdict. But certain disclosures have been made which are quite apart from the issues to be dealt with by the Committee. As regards the Jallianwala affair English public opinion has made a pronouncement as emphatic as it is practically unanimous, realising that the national honour and credit were at stake. The *Manchester Guardian* considers General Dyer 'a mad man let loose to massacre at large.' A parallel case was that in connection with the Dublin Revolt. Mr. Sheehy Skeffington and two others were ordered to be shot by a military officer under circumstances which afforded no justification for such a step. The officer was tried and declared to be of unsound mind. Will General Dyer be tried and pronounced insane?

But in the tragedy of the Punjab, General Dyer was



one out of many actors. If he is a mad man, what about General Beynon and Sir Michael O'Dwyer who telegraphed to him their approval of his brave achievement? Are they to be treated as mad men? And what about the others the record of whose mighty deeds yet remains to tickle the fancy of a nation which plumes itself and rightly, on its justice and humanity. There are the Gujranwala episode and the crawling incident to be reckoned with. There are the brutalities which were impartially distributed in the whole area of martial law. There are the mountebanks who indulged in the invention of fancy offences and fancy punishments. There are those who gloated in the infliction of indignities and degradations of sorts to satisfy their petty spite against political agitators. What about the numerous boasters who exulted in their deeds and affirmed they would repeat them if necessary? And what about those responsible for preventing for months a leakage of the true facts? Are these all to be treated as mad men? The truth is, the British nation finds itself in a tight corner at present. It is easy enough to declare a single individual a mad man, but what is to be done with the band of men that are competing for that honour? And are we certain that these good people are entitled to be called mad men? They will not only deny the soft impeachment but will put on the virtuous look of martyrs who are the victims of the malicious attacks of individuals whose ignorance they will say is only exceeded by their unreasonableness.

A careful scrutiny will elicit the fact that if these men have acted as mad men there was considerable method in their madness. In the whole course of this sorry business it will be found that there was

a particular strain of mentality which characterised their conduct, and this has been brought out in broad relief by the evidence which has been recorded by the Hunter Commission. There is the racial feeling accentuated to the utmost extent. It was common talk amongst Europeans in those days that for every white man that had been killed the penalty paid was a hundred Indian lives. It was a feather in the cap of the European and more so in that of the Anglo-Indian who cherishes the most peculiar notions of his ancestry. It is refreshing to find the *Nation* writing :—‘Above all we must avoid like poison the fatal doctrine that the life of an Indian counts for less than the life of an Englishman, for that is a basis on which you build not the kind of society for which we profess to be preparing India, but the kind of society in which a foreign ruler takes over the traditions of an oriental despot.’ Then there is the pride which is the stock in trade of the conqueror who delights in impressing on him of the subject race the immensity of the gap which divides them. The salaaming incident, the umbrella episode, the forcing of individuals to prostrate themselves and rub the ground with their foreheads have a significance peculiarly their own. As to the anxiety for the maintenance of British rule no objection could have been taken to it but for the indifference shown as to the means by which this end was to be attained. Kindness, justice and humanity were superseded by frightfulness of every kind and this, it was verily believed, would terrorise the people into abject submission. There was an outcry in England against Hun atrocities and Hun inhumanity, and now writes the *Daily News*, ‘the scene of this new frightfulness is not Belgium, but India, the General responsible is not German

but British. The victims are not technically enemies but 'rebels,' in General Dyer's words, that is to say, British subjects who innocently or otherwise ventured to act in contravention of his decrees.' *Truth* says the 'affair reads just like some of the stories of German frightfulness in France and Belgium, and General Dyer's defence of himself before Lord Hunter's Committee is what will come naturally from the mouth of a Prussian officer in the same position'. The *Westminster Gazette* says: 'Not the least astonishing thing of all is that General Dyer's massacre did not precipitate a real rebellion...Saner people will realise that a few more episodes of this kind would suffice to bring our rule to an end.' This is strong language, but we shall see that it is justified.

On the 13th April 1919, a couple of days before martial law was actually proclaimed in Amritsar, General Dyer promulgated an order prohibiting the holding of any public meeting, without in any way intimating to the people the capacity under which he passed this order. He admits he cannot say whether 'any measures were taken to ensure its publication to the citizens.' If all the people did not come to know of this order it was no fault of his, for he had left the publication to the police. And if on that particular day the Baisakhi fair happened to be held, when outsiders in crowds visited the city, well, so much the worse for them. Towards evening information was brought to him that a meeting was to be held at the Jallianwala Bagh. Forthwith his mind was made up. The people who had disobeyed his orders were rebels and needed a lesson in respect to flouting the orders of a General. He proceeded with two columns of twenty-five men each to the spot up to within eight or ten yards where

a man was addressing the crowd. He opened fire 'immediately', because, he says, 'I had thought about the matter and do not imagine it took me more than thirty seconds to make up my mind as to what my duty was.' His duty was to disperse the mob by firing on them. But he found that no sooner had he arrived on the scene the crowd began to run away. For all that the order was given to fire and he says the mob 'immediately began to disperse.' The firing was continued because, says the gallant General, 'I thought it my duty to go on till it did disperse. If I fired a little the effect would not be sufficient. If I had fired a little I should be wrong in firing at all.' Therefore the firing went on with certain intermissions, when it was checked so that it could be directed upon places where the crowd was the thickest. It ceased when the ammunition was exhausted, and the glorious task had been achieved of four to five hundred men being killed and about fifteen hundred wounded. The commander then wends his way homewards, proud of having done his duty as an officer and a gentleman. Now the officious *Daily Herald* steps in and wonders at 'the incredible indifference to human suffering in leaving the wounded unattended in the streets', and adds: 'This we presume was done in order to teach men and women of a different civilization and a different religion what a beautiful and merciful thing Christianity is and how sacred we British hold the law of Him who said that we are to love our enemies.' But the real explanation is to be found in the evidence given by General Dyer before the Hunter Commission where he lets us have an insight into his character and into the principles which formed the basis of his conduct. He was a man in authority and he

expected a general recognition of this fact. He was a conscientious man, ready to discharge his duty at all costs. He had a logical mind, which inspired him as to the proper sequence of events. For disobeying his duties the penalty must be paid. He honestly believed that the unsuccessfully ruling over India "the one thing was force." He was never precipitate but 'searched his mind' before deciding on any particular course of action. He was a very sensitive man and rather than 'be laughed at' he would any day see hundreds of men butchered. He was a man who, for the sake of 'making examples of the people' who had flouted his order, did not care if what he did 'had the effect of permanently alienating the people or putting them out of sympathy with the administration.' He was a man of grand ideas and aimed at doing something which would make an 'impression throughout Panjab', but unfortunately he overshot the mark and has made an impression throughout the world. It was but natural that an officer with his peculiar notions of 'duty' stamped on his brow should tell the Commission that 'it was not my duty to render aid to the wounded.' Mr. Irvine the chief civil officer at Amritsar, says he did nothing because 'it was no business of his, a military officer being in command.' And as the curfew order had already been passed which prevented people leaving their houses after dusk the fate of the wounded can more easily be surmised than described.

A good deal less than this was enough to bring in a verdict of insanity against the military officer responsible for the death of Mr. Skeffington in Dublin, but it is unfair to General Dyer to force this plea on him. His narrative of what has come to be called the Amritsar massacre throws a flood of light on his mentality. He



reiterates the fact that it was his 'duty' to disperse the crowd, but if on his arrival on the scene he had found the mob had already dispersed he would have been grievously disappointed. He admits that 'he could have dispersed the crowd perhaps even without firing,' and to the question put to him, 'in firing was it your object to disperse the crowd' he gave the evasive but significant answer, 'I was going to fire until they had dispersed.' On his way to Jallianwala Bagh his mind seems to have been obsessed with the idea of teaching persons whom he had put down as rebels for disobeying his order 'a lesson that would make a wide impression throughout the Punjab.' It was on this 'duty' his whole mind was concentrated and therefore such trifles as asking the crowd to disperse before firing on them or allowing the frantic runaways to escape during the short intervals he stopped firing did not enter his logical mind. He says, 'I looked upon the crowd as rebels and therefore considered it my duty to fire on and to fire well.' Says the *New Witness* :—'He is so logical as to confess that in all probability he would have turned his machine guns on the helpless people if he had been able to bring them into play.' And this makes his conduct intelligible in leaving the wounded uncared for, because any attention paid to them would have detracted from the double duty he had in view, the punishment of the 'rebels' and the doing of 'something very strong which would create an impression throughout the Punjab.'

The crawling incident and the flogging episode elucidate still more clearly the mentality of General Dyer. Miss Sherwood, an English lady, was brutally assaulted in one of the streets of Amritsar by some ruffians and left for dead. Her own published statement testifies to the fact

of friendly Indians having dissuaded her from being out at that time and to their having eventually rescued her. She writes : "I heard not the cries of 'kill, kill' in that street, but the shouts in another of 'Leave her alone—she is a woman.' It was Indians who rescued me, an Indian house that gave me shelter, and Indian hands that first dressed my wounds." No punishment inflicted on her assailants would have been too severe. Six men were taken in custody on more suspicion and kept in detention in the Fort. General Dyer goes to the spot a few days later and says he ordered the street 'to be blocked at both ends and no Indian was to be allowed to go through, and if he did he must go through on all fours. That all fours was by some means interpreted into crawling. My order said, on all fours'. Simultaneously he ordered, 'erect a triangle there,' the idea being that 'at this place the persons who had beaten Miss Sherwood should be flogged.' By a curious coincidence the six men, who were arrested on suspicion and against whom no evidence had yet been recorded, were brought from the Fort to this spot and flogged with thirty lashes each for some alleged breach of Fort discipline. No sooner the 'all fours' order had been passed and General Dyer had moved a 100 yards than twelve men were arrested and ordered to go through the crawling process, the reason given being that they were insolent, but in reality, for the delectation of General Dyer and his associates. This order continued for five days, during which time the residents, if they had to pass through, had to crawl as best they could. And of course no scavenging was done during the whole period as it is out of the question that any outsiders would care to enter this proscribed area. The only visitors who favoured this spot were the

unfortunate individuals who were brought there to be flogged. That the electric current and water supply were cut off is admitted. The official explanation for this is by no means convincing, and there is a deep seated conviction in the mind of every Indian that reprisals were resorted to by a humane and civilised nation which not long before had vehemently inveighed against similar acts of savagery on the part of the Huns. To place under a ban both the innocent and the guilty is an achievement which only the heroes of the Punjab could have believed would redound to the credit and safety of English rule in India. 'The substance of Prussianism,' writes the *Manchester Guardian*, 'was to use terror indiscriminately to cow opposition, without regard to any question of guilt or innocence. At this the world was justly horrified, and in the long run the thing has been fatal to Prussia.'

It is doing General Dyer a great injustice to call him a mad man. He had a heavy responsibility thrown upon him, and he discharged it so as to win the approval of his superior officer and that of the Governor of the province. It was the policy of Sir Michael O'Dwyer that was being carried out by all the authorities concerned in putting down the disorder, and no protest was made by him in respect to the general indulgence of frightfulness. It is impossible to escape the conclusion that the ultimate responsibility is his, and not so much his personally as that of the policy pursued by him for six years and to which he gave expression before the Joint Committee of Reforms that the form of government best suited for India at present is autocracy. This, translated into action by his lieutenants, meant a license to indulge in any kind of frightfulness provided the object kept in view was the

conservation of British power and prestige. We have seen that in other parts of India different methods were adopted to secure the same end, and the reason of this will not be very gratifying to the people of the Punjab. They are credited with being a martial race, and yet an experiment was tried there which Englishmen know would not have been tolerated in any other part of India. A long residence in the Punjab has forced the conviction on me that toadyism, flunkeyism, the craving for rewards, titles and seats in a Durbar have obsessed the people there to an extent unknown elsewhere. They are utterly lacking in moral backbone, and for selfish ends will commit despicable acts without being conscious that they were doing anything improper. Corruption is rampant in all departments and amongst all classes of officials. To the credit of Sir Michael O'Dwyer it must be said he tried to clear the atmosphere by making examples of high judicial officers, Hindu, Mahomedan, Indian Christian and Anglo-Indian. If the later days of his regime have struck horror throughout the world, yet those recognised by Government as the leaders of their communities in the Punjab went in deputation and with the most fulsome adulation of his achievement bade farewell to the departing Governor. And only the other day his admirers at Rawalpindi entertained him, though only a few weeks before the united voice of India had condemned him at the Congress and Moslem League sessions in Amritsar and at the Moderate Conference in Calcutta in no sparing terms. That people so devoid of self-respect should be made the objects of any kind of experiment need excite no surprise. But the sufferings they have undergone have borne fruit and the small band of political agitators on whom rests

the future progress of the Punjab have received such an accession to their ranks that before long the race of toadies will be wiped out of existence. Frightfulness was utilised for a particular purpose, but it has aroused such a deep resentment in the whole of India that it has opened the eyes of the submissive Punjabis and has infused a new spirit in them which will make a repetition of this frightfulness next to impossible.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE DEMAND FOR REPARATION.

In the previous article the achievements of General Dyer have been noticed and in justice to the English nation the comments of the press condemning him in scathing terms have been freely quoted. But as there is an outcry for the punishment of others besides the hero of Amritsar it becomes incumbent to obtain at least a general idea of their actions which are being so keenly resented. We shall then be in a position to decide whether there are adequate grounds for the demand for reparation, as also what form this should take so as to serve the two ends which it is desirable to keep in view, that of affording relief to the outraged feelings of the people and of restoring their confidence in British justice and humanity.

A mentality similar to that of General Dyer is to be found in Col. Frank Johnson, the martial law administrator of Lahore. He was equally indifferent to the effect his repressive measures would have on the general attitude of the people towards Government. He was as eager to terrorize over them by a resort to frightfulness. He was as destitute of the faculty of discriminating between the innocent and the guilty. A martial law notice posted on a college wall was found torn and 500 students and professors were arrested and kept in custody for two days. The gallant officer airily explains—'I was looking for an opportunity to bring home to all concerned what martial law meant'. The students of three other colleges were

ordered to be present at roll-call four times a day at his headquarters, to do which they had for three weeks to walk sixteen miles daily in the blazing sun of May. It was not by way of punishment for any offence, but he says as a kindness in keeping them out of mischief and giving them physical training. He admitted that this would evoke in the young men a bitter hatred towards the British Government for the rest of their lives, but 'as there was so much sedition in these colleges nothing I did would make it worse'. The punishment most utilized was whipping and for the first few days it was administered in the open street. Its value was reckoned to be 'more than 1,000 rifles', besides its possessing certain special virtues which have been quoted in a previous chapter. To illustrate its indiscriminate use has been cited the flogging of a priest and others belonging to a wedding party for being more than ten in number. The appropriation of motor cars and carriages belonging to Indians and making them over for use to Europeans furnishes an excellent illustration of his ideas of justice. The estimation in which he held Indians is evidenced by his order that not more than two of them were to walk abreast as 'if they did not make way for Europeans the latter would be justified in assaulting them'. Martial law notices were to be posted on the houses of such persons who were certified by the criminal investigation department to be disloyal and all those supposed to be interested in politics came under this category and specially the lawyers, for Col. Johnson held the view that 'the majority of them were seditionists'. Informers had a grand time. The principal of the Dayal Singh College was fined Rs. 250 on the statement of an informer that

he had seen an objectionable poster on the outer wall. On the latter being convicted of perjury in another matter the fine was remitted. To threaten to blow up the surrounding buildings if a firearm was discharged from any particular spot testifies to the military commander's readiness to resort to the practice of Hun atrocities. He says he acted in perfect good faith and would do the same things over again and he was probably very much astonished at some hyper-critical persons accusing him of being deficient in the ordinary instincts of justice and humanity with the alternative that his mental condition rendered him an irresponsible agent.

In his evidence before the Hunter Commission, General Beynon, commanding the 2nd division Army Corps, not only expressed his entire approval of the manner in which martial law was administered but has characterized the operations of General Dyer and Col. Johnson as a veritable blessing to the people. We may, therefore, take it that with the modifications necessitated by local conditions the martial law orders promulgated in Lahore were also enforced in other infected areas. But the military administrators were allowed a discretion to issue any special orders that were deemed by them to be necessary. A recital of some of these will afford instructive reading. The salaaming order which required Indians to salute European officials was enforced all over the proscribed area, while in some districts its scope was extended to directing that 'all persons riding on animals or in wheeled conveyances will alight, persons carrying open and raised umbrellas shall lower them and all persons salute or salaam with the hand'. The experience of the legal practitioners in the area said to be infected would fill a whole volume. Suffice

it to say that a large number of them were arrested and had to go through indignities of sorts. Some of these were discharged after being kept in custody for weeks without being brought to trial, but the bulk of them were convicted of waging war against the King-Emperor and sentenced to transportation for life and confiscation of their property. It need hardly be said all these have now been released as they came under the category of political offenders who it was not even alleged had taken any overt part in the excesses that were committed by the 'riff-raffs' of the town and country.

Gujranwala has earned a right to a prominent place in the future history of the Punjab for not only being the scene where the first experiments in bombing from an aeroplane were tried by the rulers of India but for the manner in which the operations were carried on. On its approach the mob, as was to be expected, took to its heels and on this dispersing rabble bombs were dropped. One young airman stated before the Hunter Commission that 'noticing a band of Indians approaching the town two miles distant off he dropped three bombs killing three men and pursued them for some distance with his machine-gun.' Another deposed to finding '120 men in a field whom he machine-gunned till they fled and then scattered with bombs people listening to a speech in front of a house'. They both declared they were merely carrying out superior orders which were to disperse all crowds in and about Gujranwala. 'This use of the Royal Air Force for attacking defenceless citizens', says the *Manchester Guardian*, 'a use which even the laws of war do not permit, has been rightly denounced as one of the most serious features in this lamentable record.' Col. O'Brien,

the deputy commissioner, secured himself by obtaining the assurance of the Punjab Government that his acts would be validated. He was one of those who were indifferent to any resentment or bitterness that might be aroused by the indulgence in frightfulness, as he said that 'the bitterness was already existing.' He arrested 30 persons, mostly pleaders and barristers, who were handcuffed and chained in pairs, a Hindu and a Mahomedan, to ridicule the newly formed amity of the two communities. They were then marched through the city preceded by two municipal commissioners who pointed to the people to make way for the prisoners on pain of being bombed or shot down. They were taken to the railway station, put in an open coal truck and were conveyed to Lahore where with other prisoners they were kept chained in a room which opened in a latrine. They journeyed to and fro between Lahore and Gujranwala always handcuffed and chained. Col. O'Brien also cannot escape the responsibility of having allowed one of his subordinates, Mr. Bosworth Smith, the sub-divisional officer at Kasur, to indulge in the most extraordinary eccentricities. Major Smith, the martial law administrator of Gujranwala, Gujrat and Lyallpore districts, admits that in his area students including those in the infant class were ordered to attend a parade two or three times a day to salute the Union Jack and that restrictions were placed on the movements of the lawyers as he considered them 'suspicious characters.'

In Kasur, Capt. Doveton evolved fancy offences and fancy punishments and varied General Dyer's crawling order to the extent of forcing persons to lie flat and touch the ground with their foreheads. This, he said, was done



to impress on them the authority of Government. He had men stripped and flogged in the presence of prostitutes just as in Amritsar men were flogged before the whole body of lawyers, all of whom, young and old, had been enrolled as special constables. Col. MacRae admitted that he sent for some of the bigger boys of a school and flogged them in public, not because they had done anything but by way of example and stated 'it was their misfortune that they happened to be big boys'. All the inhabitants, about 10,000 in number, including little boys, had to turn out for the identification parade and were made to stand bareheaded for six hours in the heat of the day. Out of these 150 were arrested and were confined in a cage placed on the railway station platform, where a gallows had been erected before anyone had even been put on his trial. It is more than likely that the railway staff was unwilling to give evidence which would lead to the identification of the criminals who had killed three Europeans under circumstances which are the subject of dispute, but to bring the staff to reason by flogging a ticket collector, an educated man, was a process for which so far it was believed the Huns had claimed a monopoly. Mr. Bosworth Smith has had an erratic official career, and at the time of the disturbances was going through a period of degradation. He refused to answer some of the questions put by the Inquiry Commissioners and declined to give any reason for doing so. He proposed the building of a house of repentance where persons could go and repent, but said he had forgotten whether he got the school boys to repeat at parade 'we have not committed any offence, we repent, we repent, we repent.' He arrested the station master at Sangla who later on was released and then

appeared as a Crown witness, but he could not say whether 'it was after the release of this man the identification process by the station staff was started.' He, however, recollected that persons were flogged in an open part of the town. He arrested 124 persons at Sangla and admitted that when the respectable persons of the town had agreed to pay a penalty of Rs. 50,000 he ordered the release of all but eight men, who were subsequently put on their trial for being concerned in the riots. He ordered the arrest of Attar Singh, a Lambarder, aged 60, as a hostage for his sons and directed his property to be confiscated till his son surrendered and any one touching it or cutting his crops was to be shot. Another Lambardar, Gowhar Singh, was also arrested as a hostage for his sons, but was released the next day when his sons surrendered. He was again arrested and was finally released when the martial law was removed, but his pension was stopped.

It is obvious that some at least of the officers concerned in the martial law operations have been guilty of acts partaking more or less of the nature of frightfulness. The demand for reparation by the punishment of the most flagrant offenders is, therefore, by no means uncalled for or unreasonable. It is being advanced not only in India but in England where the Secretary of State for India has committed the Government to take some steps which 'would vindicate in the eyes of the world, the justice and honour of British rule'. 'The *Westminster Gazette* suggests the immediate recall of General Dyer and his being dealt with in a manner that the British nation would stand absolved'. The *New Witness* says 'he should be shot unless he is able to prove that Amritsar was in such a state of anarchy which if

unchecked would have developed into a condition of things similar to that of the mutiny.' The Bombay correspondent of the *Times* says with respect to the disclosures generally that 'they have administered a shock to the humanity and self respect of India . . . When the Hunter Commission has reported Parliament must allow no question of expediency to stand in the way of administration of justice however unpalatable, otherwise they will leave a wound which for generations will not heal'. Indian public opinion is fairly unanimous in this respect. Even the Moderates who are in high favour with Government passed a resolution in their Conference in Calcutta that 'it is imperatively necessary to make amends for the outraged feelings of the Indian nation and that British honour and justice should be vindicated by taking steps to bring to justice any officers, high or low, civil or military, who may be found to have acted unreasonably and in excess of their powers or to have authorized such acts. A Moderate journal like the *Leader* writes : 'The restoration of the confidence of Indians in the sense of British justice is more important than the saving of the skins of any number of officials.'

This raises a curious point as to the effect of the Indemnity Act to protect these officials. There were heated discussions when the Bill was introduced in the Legislative Council. So far not a word has been said by me on the subject, for I was not prepared to contest the proposition that it was the duty of Government to afford protection to those who had undertaken responsibilities at a critical period when it was alleged anarchy prevailed over a portion of the Punjab. The Government was under a moral obligation to move the Legislature in the interests

of those officers who had discharged their duties in good faith and under a reasonable belief that what they did was for the preservation or restoration of law and order. Looked at in the light of subsequent revelations the Government cannot escape the charge of having acted in a disingenuous manner in the strenuous efforts they made to suppress information. In a previous chapter we have seen that the Punjab Government by censoring the press and by means of other repressive measures prevented the outside world from obtaining any knowledge of the doings of the officials during the period of the so-called rebellion, though rumours which were by no means exaggerated were afloat that some frightful things were happening in that part of India. It is a significant fact indicating the extent to which people had been cowed down, that even when the martial law regime was over they were averse to disclosing even a tithe of the experiences they had undergone. Public spirited men from other provinces visited the Punjab and by their exertions some light was thrown on the frightfulness which for a time had reigned rampant. Government was of course keeping a discreet silence which from their point of view was natural. But when Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya put a large number of searching questions in the Indian Legislative Council with the idea of eliciting the truth of certain allegations in respect to the high-handed and oppressive measures of the officials the action of Government was inexcusable in answering a few of them in an evasive manner and refusing to answer the bulk of them on the plea that it would not be consistent with the public interest. This was an unwise course to adopt considering the hostile construction that was bound to be put on it, while the object of

Government to prevent any disclosures was defeated a few weeks later when the revelations made before the Hunter Committee withdrew the veil, at latest partially, from most of the scenes of this tragic period in the Punjab. The fatuity of those responsible for allowing the inquiry to proceed *ex parte* so far as the people were concerned has saved the officials from a fuller exposure of their vagaries, which involved frightfulness of every kind. The net gain to Government was the Indemnity Act, for even they would scarcely have had the hardihood to push forward the Bill if a straightforward answer had been given to the questions. But the Act is subject to certain limitations and it is more than doubtful if some of the officials concerned can take advantage of it. They plead good faith, but only on the strength of putting a great strain on the credulity of mankind. They vehemently urge that their acts were reasonable and were necessary for the restoration of order, oblivious of the fact that they are thereby claiming for themselves a low standard of intelligence, for no one possessing average mental capacity would care to justify some of the incidents and episodes which formed part of the frightfulness that was indulged in. The rashness of a single officer resulting in the loss of three lives turned the feelings of the Irish in favour of the rebels in Ireland, but how can we calculate the result of a series of outrages which have aroused the resentment of a justly incensed people ?

But for all that I entertain grave doubts as to the expediency of the nature of the demand for reparation that is being made. It is bound to produce considerable irritation in the minds of the English community, official and nonofficial. The present moment we are at a critical



period in the history of India when it is most essential that general harmony and good will should prevail. Is it desirable to rake up matters which would be a necessary consequence of the general outcry for the punishment of the principal offenders. The punishment could be either through the courts or at the hands of the executive. As to judicial proceedings can we be certain of the result? By the Indemnity Act the *onus probandi* is placed on those who assert want of good faith or that the officers concerned exceeded their powers or that their operations were so outrageous that no reasonable person would consider they were really necessary for the preservation or restoration of order. The whole strength of the executive will be put forward in their defence and I am not prepared to say that Government could be reproached for doing this in spite of the fact that in some of them a strain of mentality was developed which puts them out of the pale of those who are entitled to protection. For we ought to bear in mind the fact that the officials have good grounds for pleading that they were merely the instruments for carrying out the orders of their superiors, or that the latter were fully cognizant of their proceedings and never raised any objection to them and in most instances approved of them. The airmen who threw bombs on a defenceless crowd in Gujranwala have stated that they only carried out orders that were given to them to disperse all crowds in and about the city. The massacre at Amritsar was approved in the famous telegram sent by General Beynon to General Dyer communicating his own approbation and that of Sir Michael O'Dwyer whose attempt in a letter to the *Times* to explain the incident is on the face of it absurd and inconclusive. Col. O'Brien stated that he had a free

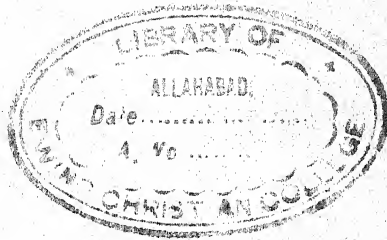
hand given to him by the Punjab Government who promised to validate his acts. And one of the reasons urged by the Government of India for the passing of the Indemnity Act was that a promise of protection was given to the officers concerned in putting down the disorders. Any proceedings started against them would probably end in a revulsion of feeling in their favour and would any how be productive of bitterness that had better be avoided.

But how can we account for the strange coincidence that in the Punjab was congregated a band of men who were afflicted by a peculiar kind of mental and moral infirmity which found relief in the indulgence in frightfulness of sorts? There are ample grounds for the conclusion that this particular strain of mentality was induced by their being for years familiarized with a policy, the natural outcome of which was the cultivation of a spirit of autocracy and of bending the will of the people by a resort to force and repression. And for this policy Sir Michael O'Dwyer was entirely responsible. He has confessed to autocracy being the form of Government best suited for India and during the six years he ruled over the Punjab he had ample opportunity, which he fully availed of, for putting his theory into practise. He repeatedly gave expression to his want of confidence in and to the absence of sympathy with the educated classes and of the necessity of a tight hand being kept over them, and can we wonder that his subordinates and others living in close association with him should have imbibed similar ideas? The final responsibility for the orgy of frightfulness therefore rests on the late Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab. It was by him and with instructions from him that aeroplanes were sent to Gujranwala. It was at his instance that

martial law was proclaimed and we have it in evidence that daily conferences were held at Government House to devise measures for the occasion and that orders issued by the military authorities were in due course forwarded to him. He did nothing to mitigate their rigour nor did he express any disapprobation beyond ordering the gallows erected at Kasur to be pulled down, the flogging in public to be discontinued and cancelling the crawling order at Amritsar. Under these circumstances it is futile to expect the executive to punish even the most flagrant offenders.

Are the people then to have no reparation for the wrongs they have suffered? Public opinion in England is against this view and India looks to the British Parliament for some compensation for the lacerated feelings of the people. The acts of frightfulness that have been committed should be repudiated by the English Government as foreign to the instincts of a civilised nation, and a formal declaration to this effect should be made by the Government of India. Sir Michael O'Dwyer should have the severest censure passed on him for his maladministration and for having degraded the British name and honour. India should be relieved of the presence in it of men of the type of General Dyer, Col Frank Johnson, Col O'Brien and Mr. Bosworth Smith, against whom there is to be found in the country a strong feeling of resentment. As to the rest the repudiation of their acts will constitute in itself a censure which will serve as a lesson to English officials in the future. If even to this extent reparation is denied it is useless to expect the people of India to have any good feeling towards the English and towards English rule. But the Government have ready at hand another means of mollifying the feelings of the people. The Privy

Council has dismissed on points of law the appeals of Bugga and others, on some of whom sentences of death have been passed by the martial law courts. There is a strong feeling in India that these courts acted vindictively in some instances and in other instances strained the facts so as to arrive at conclusions that were not justified. The desire is most strongly expressed that an amnesty should be extended to such of the persons who were not actually engaged in the act of committing outrages. And so far as that goes it is a common belief that Englishmen more than compensated themselves by the outrages committed by their agents in the Punjab. It is therefore to be hoped the cases of those men will be reconsidered to whom so far no clemency has been extended.



## CHAPTER XV.

### THE FUTURE OUTLOOK.

In bringing to a close this series of articles it would be desirable to take a general survey of the political condition of India so as to be able to form some idea as to what the future has in store for us. The first article appeared in the *Leader* of the 2nd October 1919. During these six months events have been spinning fast but unfortunately in counter directions, for while the tendency of some of them has been to promote mutual good feeling and to allay the existing unrest and discontent that of others was calculated to produce disunion and to exasperate the people and accentuate the underlying bitterness towards the nation that rules over our land. The promise made by the Secretary of State to introduce such changes in the constitution of the government of the country whereby the people may have a responsible share in its administration has been discharged so far that the English Parliament has passed an Act which will, to an appreciable extent, meet the pressing demand for self-government. There are indications of a decided change in the attitude of the English, both officials and non-officials, towards Indians, in spite of the imminence of a transfer of a considerable amount of power from the rulers to the ruled, and expression is being given to a desire on their part for co-operation, which, though unexpected, should nevertheless be very welcome. The *entente* between the Hindus and Mahomedans is progressing by leaps and bounds, and is



as remarkable as the rapid increase in the number of those who have come under the influence of the new awakening to political consciousness. The King-Emperor's proclamation evincing a genuine sympathy for the aspirations of the people and an earnest desire to promote their material and moral welfare, followed as it has been by a general amnesty towards political offenders, indicates that the art of government is not lost to the English nation, for these expressions of good will have made a deep impression on the minds of the people and have won their hearts. These are satisfactory features and are calculated to exercise a salutary influence on the political future of India.

On the other hand, counteracting forces have also been at work. The breach between the two parties of the educated classes has been widening in so far that a reconciliation between them seems improbable without a sacrifice of principle on one side or the other. Sectarian differences have become more pronounced, evidence of which is to be found in the frantic efforts put forward for communal representation in the various Councils. The disclosures made in course of the evidence given before the Disorders Inquiry Committee have aroused an intense feeling of indignation and resentment in the minds of the people against the Government for allowing the perpetration of a series of uncalled for acts of frightfulness. The misfortunes of Turkey have struck a sympathetic chord in the hearts of the Mohamedans, and there is to be noticed an increasing volume of excitement and bitterness by reason of the threatened dismemberment of that country and the effect it would have on the Khalifate, in respect to which the followers of the Prophet in India rightly claim a close and abiding interest. The attitude of the

extremist section of the home rule party towards Government is becoming more hostile and irreconcilable and the nature and extent of their demands and the manner in which these are asserted are calculated to obstruct the practical working of the reforms that will soon be put in motion. The future is therefore far from reassuring.

The impending reforms have some special features which stand out in broad relief. The general outline of the Act which introduces the new scheme of government does not as a matter of fact meet the demands made by the people in their quest for self-government, but to stigmatize the concessions made as "unsatisfactory, inadequate and disappointing" is doing them less than justice. In all fairness it must be admitted that an appreciable and substantial advance has been made in the direction of conferring on the people a responsible share in the administration of affairs. That this has been achieved by a persistent and an unwearied demand on our part is no doubt true, but to continue the agitation for a further extension of powers is much to be deprecated. I do not question our capacity to acquit ourselves with credit in the new role we are called upon to undertake, and it may be, as is asserted by some oversanguine individuals, that we are fit at the present moment for complete self-government, but for all that the rulers of the land, who are morally responsible for the material welfare of the country, are by no means unreasonable when they ask us to give some practical evidence of our capacity to utilize to good purpose the opportunities that are being offered to us and the power that is to be placed in our hands before making any further addition to it. To continue to agitate in this direction is therefore futile, and

our energies should rather be applied in the future towards making the best of the privileges that have been conceded to us. We find, however, threats being used by those who wish to be treated as serious politicians that they will so work the reforms as to bring about deadlocks to compell the Government to surrender to their importunate demands. It does not seem to strike them that in adopting this attitude they are giving evidence that while they are adepts in the art of destructive criticism they are either impotent or unwilling to engage in any constructive work. And, of course, such a small matter as to what the rest of the Indian people will think of their propaganda does not trouble them, for they verily believe that they alone possess a monopoly of patriotism and of the capacity requisite to engage in the task of self-government.

While some of the extremist leaders and their organs in the press are deprecating the differences which have resulted in a cleavage into parties, others are urging on the electors to send to the Councils only such men as will represent their extreme views so that the administration of affairs would be committed to them to the exclusion of the moderates. Should their efforts in this direction be successful one of two things will happen ; either the responsibilities of office will have a sobering effect on them so that they will shape the conduct of affairs keeping in view the interest of the country or they will get into such a muddle that they will have to make room for others, who though not so advanced in their opinions may be able to achieve better results. But it seems very probable that neither the extremists not the moderates will obtain a clear majority at the coming election. We have to take into account the extension of

the suffrage which will enfranchise a large number of agricultural tenants and, these, as is but natural, will be more or less under the influence of the zamindars, using this term to signify the land owners and not the cultivators to whom it is applied in the Panjab. Now the bulk of the zamindars are still somewhat backward from the educational point of view. They have eschewed politics and their submissiveness to the authorities has often made them reactionaries. It will take time to imbue in them a true spirit of patriotism which will operate on the one hand to release them from the official leading strings, and on the other hand will infuse in them a genuine sympathy with the wants and necessities of other classes, and especially their tenants, so that their activities may be directed towards the promotion of the material and moral advancement of the country. As between the moderates and the extremists the balance of power will be in their hands and the educated classes whose agitation has resulted in bringing about a new order of things may, to start with, have to face reactionaries drawn from the officials and the zamindars. This is the true significance of the unfortunate differences which have split up the *intellegentia* into two curiously hostile parties. The extremists are pursuing a suicidal policy in putting forward extravagant demands which are not likely to be conceded by Government, nor will they receive any support from the sober-minded and thinking portion of the Indian people. And while paeans of joy are being sung to celebrate the newly formed amity of the Hindus and Mahomedans abuse and vituperation is being showered on the rask and file of those who refuse to join them in their headlong onrush towards the goal they have in view. It makes one despair

as to the future of a country where men are so irrational and short-sighted as to indulge in such an inconsistency and yet aim to appropriate the ruling power to the exclusion of all others. In their present frame of mind it is almost useless to point out to them the advantage to be gained by the exercise of mutual toleration and co-operation on the part of all classes and communities, for in spite of the encouraging attitude of some of the officials we ought to keep in view the contingency that there may be others who might prove reactionary and obstructive under the honest belief that they were thereby protecting the interests of the minorities and of classes that were not represented.

The progress made by the Hindu-Mohomedan *entente* to which various causes have contributed, is as striking as it is gratifying. The first move was made by some of the leaders of the two communities in the furtherance of their political propaganda, but a process of careful engineering has brought the masses to fraternise with each other to the extent of discarding social and religious prejudices. A most prominent feature of the protest against the Rowlatt Act was that it furnished an occasion for all classes and communities to join in a common cause. With a hazy idea of the provisions of this measure a large number of persons joined in denouncing it in obedience to the solicitations of their leaders or under the impression that they were doing a patriotic act. Other circumstances favoured to cement this union between the Hindus and Mahomedans. From the platform and the press the news has been proclaimed as to the advent of reforms which would give the people a share in the administration of the affairs of the country and this stimulated a spirit of co-operation.



The disclosures made before the Hunter Commission of the orgy of frightfulness indulged in by the authorities has struck a note of horror which has resounded in the remotest corners of India and has united the most divergent elements of society in the expression of their indignation. The Khilafat question though it exclusively concerns the Mohomedans has been utilised by certain political leaders on both sides to develop the union between the two communities so as to bring pressure to bear on the Government. And herein lies the weak point—an artificial *entente* influenced by ulterior motives. Eliminate these and dissolution may set in, for the union was not based primarily on mutual regard and sympathy. The Moslems for joining the Hindus in their political agitation fixed a price which consisted in the concession to them of communal representation on a numerical basis. Any difference of opinion on this point or an attempt to extract further concessions would at once produce a breach. The debate in the Legislative Council on the Dacca University Bill revealed this feature of the *entente* in that the Moslems apart from the question of merit claimed a special representation on the University and the tutorial staff. This being in excess of the bargain that had been struck was demurred to by the Hindus, which led to mutual recriminations. If the principle of communal representation is to be extended to other departments of public life, which is resisted by a strong volume of public opinion, the Hindu-Mahomedan union cannot be held to be an unmixed blessing. But as the Moslems consider it the only means to keep pace with the other communities the portents are unfavourable as to the continuance of the *entente*. It is, however, to be hoped the

advance of education and the undoubted advantage to both communities to be derived from mutual toleration and co-operation will place the understanding on a more solid basis.

When Turkey was coerced by Germany to join in the war against the Allies the Muslims of India regretted that a country peopled by co-religionists should be fighting against England which claimed their allegiance. But there was no wavering on their part. Mr. Lloyd George has done no more than common justice in his declaration in the House of Commons that "there had been no more loyal adherents to the throne or more effective supporters of the Empire in its hour of trial than the Moslems of India." These therefore expect and in all fairness are entitled to some adequate return, and in considering the Khalifat question this should be borne in mind. But it is much to be feared that in their excitement they are unable to see things in their true perspective and to exercise a calm and clear judgment. In accusing England with a lack of zeal in advocating the cause of Turkey they ignore the strenuous and persistent efforts made by Mr. Montagu, Lord Sinha and the Mahrajah of Bikaneer to obtain the best possible terms for the Ottoman Empire. As a result of their advocacy and in deference to the wishes of the Mahomedans of India the Sultan, who ran a great risk of being expelled from Europe, will it has been announced be allowed to retain Constantinople. This decision of the Peace Conference has given rise to a counter agitation in England and in America, which is being resented in India by people who seem to forget that the Christians of those countries are doing no more than interest themselves in the fate of their co-religionists

who have been the victims of Turkish misrule, just as the Mahomedans are interesting themselves in their co-religionists in Turkey. It seems more than probable that the decision arrived at will not be rescinded unless as stated by Bonar Law fresh provocation is given by Turkey to justify a change. As regards the maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire which is another of the objectives of the agitation in India it is superfluous to say much as this question is now outside the range of practical politics. Turkey has been condemned on the alleged grounds of its chronic misrule, its being the centre of intrigue and a menace to the peace of Europe, its repeated massacres of Christians and its taking up arms against the Allies. It was not likely that the arbiters of its fate would forego this opportunity for the application of the principle of self-determination in favour of those nationalities who desired to throw off the Turkish yoke. The Germans and Austrians have had to submit to the dismemberment of their respective dominions and the Ottomans had no reason to believe or to expect that any different treatment would be meted out to them. With reference to the third objective the preservation of the Khalfate no one has ever suggested that it should be taken away from the Sultan of Turkey. The Mahomedans of India evince a great respect and veneration for the Ottoman ruler, but his own subjects assassinated Sultan Hamid and there is no guarantee whatever that if it suited their views they would not treat the present Khalifa in a similar fashion. He is the *de jure* ruler of Turkey but the *de facto* rulers for years past have been the young Turkish party who headed by Enver Pasha became the tools of Germany and have brought disaster on their country and on the devoted

head of its sovereign who is most probably innocent of any wrong doing. The Mahomedans of India in their desire to succour the Sultan are very possibly playing into the hands of those who make a boast of their atheism and at any rate, have but a scant respect for their Sultan.

Doubts have been expressed as to the extent and genuineness of the Khalifat agitation. From the fact that the leaders of the extremist party occupy a prominent position amongst the exponents of the Moslim views the inference was inevitable that this agitation is being engineered for political purposes. And support was lent to this view by certain Hindus who are the pronounced critics of British rule in India associating themselves with the propaganda. And matters were made worse by Mr. Gandhi's proceeding in his blundering way to proclaim a *hartal* for Hindus on the Khilafat day and by asking them to refrain in sympathy with the Moslems from participating in the Peace Celebrations. That no response was made to this appeal is significant of the interest taken by the Hindus in this matter. But perhaps the worst blunder of all is the expression given to threats that the loyalty of the Mahomedans will be strained if an unfavourable decision is given as regards Turkey. From people who are engrossed in the struggle for existence and have their own misfortunes to think about or from men who fought for England and were cognizant of the consequences of a defeat of its opponents the most that can be expected is a sympathetic regret for the trials of their co-religionists. It is a little far-fetched to impute to them the slackening of their loyalty in their concern for those who, after all, are practically strangers. Of course as the result of agitation any result that is desired may be obtained, for

unfortunately the Mahomedan temper is acutely inflammable. But is this desirable in the interests of the country and of the people especially affected by it? Tactics like these are calculated to injure a cause which has much to commend it, and will produce needless trouble, for so long as England is responsible for the tranquility of India any attempt to disturb it would certainly be nipped in the bud. Hartal and boycott in the long run recoil on those who resort to such measures for carrying on a propaganda, and how far they are effective in attaining the end in view is doubtful.

Perhaps the most notable event during the last six months has reference to the disclosures made before the Hunter Committee of the frightfulness indulged in by the authorities, civil and military, during the late disturbances in the Panjab. This Committee as pointed out by the *Times* has no judicial character and is merely charged with the task of investigation. It did not take evidence on oath, and had no power to insist on a witness answering a question, and frequently the most relevant points failed to be elucidated by the witness proving recalcitrant. It had no power to summon witnesses but merely jotted down the statement of such officials as the Government chose to produce before them. By a most lamentable error of judgment the Congress Committee which was advocating the cause of the people refused to take a part in the proceedings and the worst features of the orgy of terrorism have not been disclosed. The value of the findings of both Committees is problematical, and it is useless to speculate on the conclusions that will be arrived at. What we are concerned with most is pithily stated by the *Manchester Guardian* which writes:—"Now the question



underlying all these stories is simple but penetrating. Is this what British rule in India means? Do we propose to hold our position there not by wisdom, restraint, and a growing partnership of liberty, but by indiscriminate shootings and bombings and light-hearted floggings? Is it to be the method of the Turk, or of the older, not yet Prussianized England? Of these questions the final verdict on the Punjab horrors will be the acid test." Sir Michael O'Dwyer in a letter to the *Times* which had commented on the disclosures has adopted the attitude so common with the officials in India of resenting outside criticism and is probably surprised at being told that "British officials in India and elsewhere are public servants and are not exempt from public criticism....The *Times* suffers no dictation from any official quarter in regard to its public duty." Whatever be the verdict of the Hunter Committee the people of India will ever be grateful to the English public and the press for the kindly and sympathetic manner in which the Punjab grievance has been dealt with and for the declaration that for the vindication of British justice and humanity the offenders should be severely dealt with.

This has to a large extent neutralised the indignation which was as deep as it was universal. Strong language was indulged in as to the consequences of this shock to the feelings of the people but it was no stronger than that used by the English press which recognised that a needless strain had been put on their loyalty and that a repetition of the conduct complained of would drive them to open rebellion. Those is a strong feeling in the country that the declaration of open rebellion in the Punjab was most gratuitous and the imposition of martial law most iniqui-

tious. Any other conclusion arrived at by the Hunter Committee will again arouse the dormant discontent of the people and if to this be added the agitation on the Khilafat question, in respect to which strenuous efforts are being made to draw in the Hindus, it can easily be surmised that the future outlook is not very reassuring.

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